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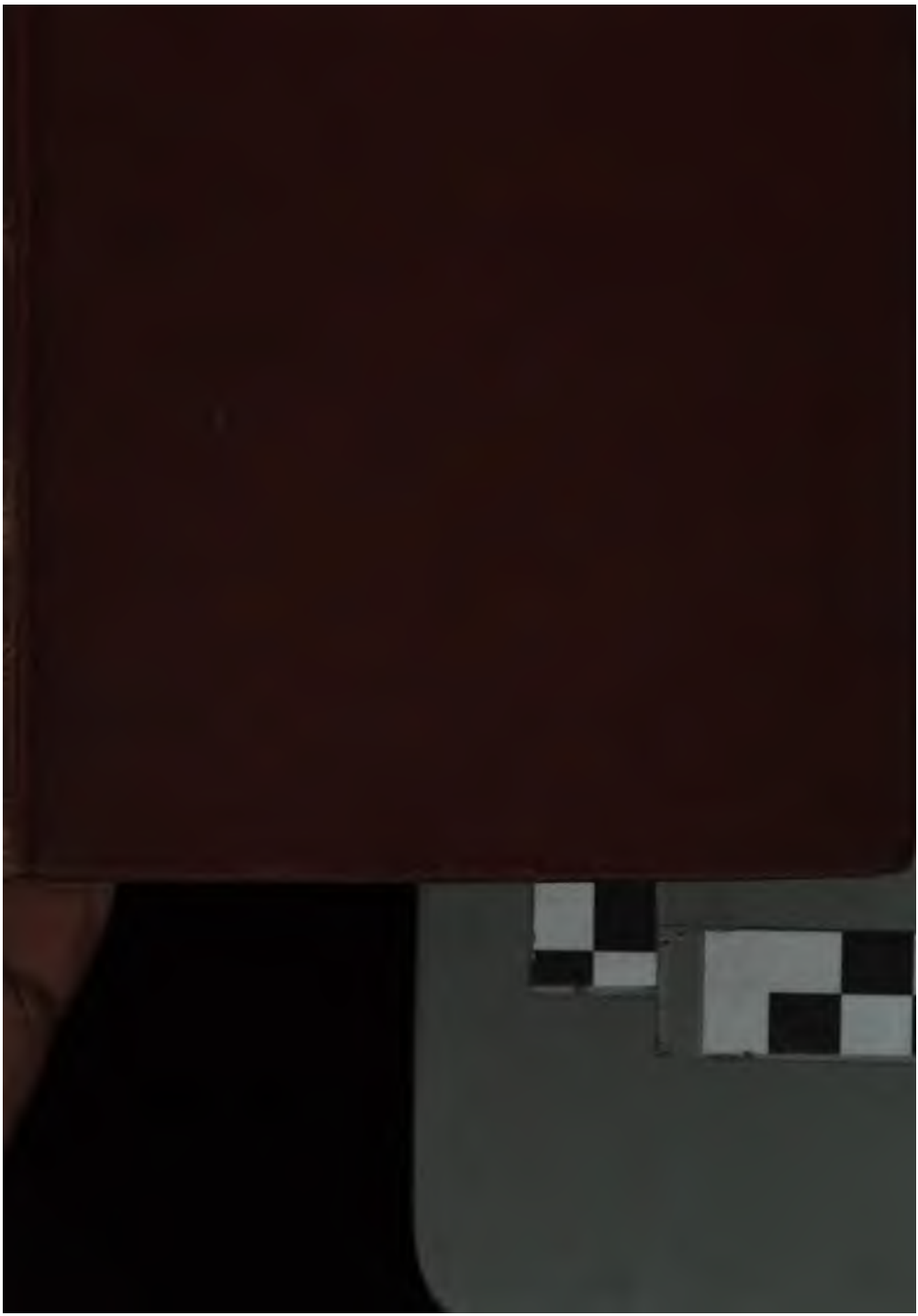

THE CHRIST THAT IS TO BE

THE CHRIST THAT IS TO BE

This book is published in Great Britain under the title "Christus Futurus."

THE CHRIST THAT IS TO BE

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"PRO CHRISTO ET ECCLESIA"

Lily Dougall.

The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

* * * * * *

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

—TENNYSON, *In Memoriam.*

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PREFACE

THIS book is only a series of successive efforts to think what the gospel of Jesus really is. Each line of thought is unfinished, and there is very much in what is said that in a mature work would be more carefully guarded from misconstruction. These fragments are only published in the hope that those who have greater opportunity may find in them something to refine and complete.

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Jesus meant his salvation to become universal. If the race progresses, that which will be its final satisfaction cannot have been fully comprehended at the beginning.

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If these systems be true for us, we shall, in finding Jesus, return to them.

Rediscovering the personal Jesus in the first reports of his ministry, we may aspire to fill this age with as great a comparative advance of the Church as the first century exhibited.

1920

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Thus (1) the unique joy which was the early effect of his message to the world goes to prove that he is himself unique.

(2) So does the fact that his message was transmitted by men obviously incapable of completely understanding it, in a form which meets the needs of successive generations and enables Jesus himself to be increasingly understood.

Many of our conclusions are based on the assumption that the life and words of Jesus have only an inspiration which the interpretations of his forerunners and followers also possess. We need to revise such conclusions, for we do not now believe that the writers of the Bible either possessed the insight of Jesus or were mechanically inspired.

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In his death he taught us an earthly thing — to endure all things and forgive all things rather than break the law of love. We have as yet only partly believed this, and can consequently only receive glimpses of the heavenly things his death can teach.

It gave new reality to the hope of immortality; for to feel the life-giving power of Jesus is to know that death could be for him only transition, and the state where his will is more perfectly realised must be the state in which our life will be perfected if we attain to it.

The visions of his resurrection-life show that character and purpose pass unchanged through death. How shall we become fitted in this life to survive in the environment of his fuller presence?

He teaches that his own shall ever share his joy, but the manner of his death precludes any doctrine of easy and universal bliss.

Concerning the lost, Jesus teaches that God suffers with all who fail, and is always as kind to the evil as to the good.

The only salvation he offers us is the offer of himself — his own character. How many of us can perceive its beauty? how many approximate to it?

We do not yet know what divine justice and forgiveness are, hence we cannot know what atonement for sin means. Yet we know that it is the vision of the dying Christ, conquering sin and death by love, that uplifts the sinner.

Human reason fails to hear what God says to us in the Crucifixion. The Church strives to hear and to interpret. This must ever be her function; but until she has brought the world to be at one with her and with Jesus she will not perfectly understand.

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BOOK I

HIS THOUGHTS AND OUR THOUGHTS

CHAPTER I

OUR NEED OF REFORMATION

IT is now admitted by New Testament scholars that those words of Jesus which appear to treat of the society he founded as partial in extent, and suggest that the kingdom of heaven would include but a few out of the many, refer only to the period of the kingdom's growth. From the general tenor of his teaching and outlook we gather that he thought, not only that he was providing a salvation for the whole world, but that his salvation must ultimately pervade the whole world; and further, that the principles of conduct he laid down, the character he exemplified, and the faith he revealed, if closely wrought into the lives of his followers would most quickly and effectually accomplish, not only their own enfranchisement, but the enfranchisement of the race.

Meantime, the reception and transmission of his message of deliverance did not depend upon its being perfectly comprehended; and the great proof we have of the truth of the earliest traditions concerning him is that his followers passed on an ideal which they only imperfectly understood. There can be

little doubt that his figure of coming in the clouds with power and great glory meant to him the world-wide acceptance of his ideals, which he rightly judged to be so far above the ideals of the time that ages would be required for their perfect comprehension by human thought. This is reasonable; he could not be the Christ of all time were it possible for any passing generation to understand more than a portion of his ideal. We are compelled, indeed, to choose between the standard of a past age, which must decrease, as all its preachers must, in the evolution of life and thought, and the God-like standard of a Christ who, because he must continually increase, must in every progressive generation be imperfectly, but less imperfectly, understood. But a teacher imperfectly understood may be obeyed, and the first question of any who would understand his doctrine must be concerning the doing of his will.

Jesus came to a suffering and vicious world, and proclaimed a God who required from every man, whatever his heredity, whatever his circumstance, not only the righteousness then acknowledged, but a far more vigorous, more perfect life; a goodness, not only in action but in imagination, in desire and motive, in every chance thought; an earnest purpose of love multiplied by every possible opportunity of doing good.

Such a God asks the impossible. Good men on all sides, then and ever since, have arisen to welcome the beautiful ideal and explain that it was meant to be impossible, — a star for moths to desire, a morrow which humanity would never see,

demanded of man by God only in order that his creature might constantly strain himself here in attempting what he could not perform, to the end that he might be a little bigger and a little better hereafter. And for nineteen centuries we have been learning more and more clearly that man, here and now, is, and since we have any history of him always has been, so hampered by the imperfections of body and brain, the taint of his fathers' fathers, the accidents of his infancy and the limitations of his age, as to be quite unable to fulfil the law of Christ in any rounded and adequate way. Our Christian teachers drew a kindly line between deadly and venial sin, until the psychologists and physiologists told us that some of the so-called deadly sins are those for which men are least responsible; and now we are taught to distinguish between infirmities which must take a lifetime to spend their force and thus diminish, and faults which can be, and therefore ought to be, swiftly cured. More and more we learn that, so far from the doom on children's children being arbitrary, it is inevitable, so inevitable that the man of science and the moralist are at variance concerning the cause and nature and cure of crime.

But Jesus taught that the demand of God for righteousness was inexorable. We go back to the historic Christ, and we find that he who was more tender over human frailty than any other showed no recognition of disciples who refused to follow where he led. Even after making every allowance for the figurative nature of our Lord's sayings, we all admit that he made the most stringent demands

for earnestness of purpose, an earnestness of which the average man is physically incapable; for a degree of self-devotion which most men's minds are unable to admire, much less acquire; for love of which most men cannot conceive, let alone feel. And we are told that he said, "Every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand . . . and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Truly, indeed, great is the fall! When we examine the boasted civilisation of Christendom with the searchlight of the precepts of Jesus Christ, we see only broken walls upon the sands of compromise. If our faith in social evolution is strengthened by the testimony of all history that to-day's civilisation is on the whole better than anything the world has yet seen, we must still admit that it is not Christian, that it is perhaps finding its most startling development in a nation not even nominally Christian. We cannot for one moment suppose that our institutions, or the average life of the nominal Christian, are so planned that our house can be said to be built upon the rock of obedience to the sayings of Christ.

There are three objections urged against the practice of Christ's precepts, — that they are meant only to inculcate an inward temper of heart; that they are meant only for a certain class; and that they are for private, not public, exercise. Let us consider these.

Our Lord's ethical teaching presupposes civil, domestic, and commercial life. We have the city, the court, the officer, the judge, the house, the

private room, the lamp, the loaf; or again, the master, the servant, the bushel basket, the field, the crop, the market. All these are a part of the life to which his injunctions apply, and are used as the pith of his illustrations. Those many devotional writers who would remove and limit the urgency of our Lord's teaching to the separate life of the soul have there a sufficient refutation, for in that inner chamber the machinery does not exist with which the commands are to be worked out. A man or body of men in any isolation, actual or ideal, could no more obey the great Sermon in St. Matthew than a celibate could discharge a man's duties toward wife and child. The peacemaker must live among those who are at variance. The meek must have cause of affront. The persecuted must face some organised tyranny, armed only with the meekness of love. The brother to whom exhaustless love is to be continually offered must be always at hand, a vain, silly, and irritating person; and how is it possible to obey the Christian rule toward such an one if we do not obey it in the market, in the street, in law court, and in religious assembly? To sit in any hermitage of fact or fancy and exercise a heavenly temper is clearly futile, so far as obedience to Jesus Christ is concerned; and as futile is the more modern method of limiting the benevolent energies by zeal in chosen channels, buying thus an imaginary license to be good fighters and good haters when our theology or liberty is called in question.

Thus it is necessary, in order to live the religious

life as our Lord directs, that we be part of a populace. What virtue is there in humility, modesty, and private devotion if the push and press of the world's opinions are not upon us? Why should we make a good toilet when we perform our self-denials if no one is to be cheered by the innocent imposture? There could be no virtue in having no anxiety about our support if we lived without worldly responsibility. The "narrow gate," the "house upon the rock" are clearly to be found only in the busy haunts of men.

If it is wrong to regard the counsels of perfection as applying only to a temper of soul, it is equally wrong to assume that they apply only to some apostolic or saintly class. If there be any class of Christians on whom these injunctions were not laid, we should have to discover what rule of life Jesus laid down for their guidance. He would seem to have left them totally without instruction. His own example cannot be their rule, for he carried out to the uttermost his own precepts. If there are those to whom it does not belong to cast their material cares on God's providence, to lend and give to all who ask, to love their enemies, then neither is it their part to let their light shine, to bring their gift to the altar, or to love their neighbours. In the whole gospel there is no indication that Jesus offers any aid or reward to a partial obedience. No man looking back, yielding only part of himself, failing to take up the whole burden, is fit for the kingdom. If there is a class to whom these tests do not apply, there is no parable, or

any teaching or action of his, indicating that his companionship, his promise, his salvation, are for that class.

Nor is it practical to suppose that the highest teaching is intended to inculcate conduct which men must imitate in their private capacity, but not as members of a social or civic system. Nothing could be more unpractical. In every-day life a man is as he does. If in every relation that binds him to the political and social order he is to act at variance with the code of Christ he will never be Christ-like. Let us ask how a man can divide his private from his public life. We are told that the commercial man or wage-earner may give lavishly in private, but in the counting-house, the workshop, and the field he must not be lavish, or he will be endangering his own solvency or underselling his neighbours. The ordinary tradesman and working-man must, then, give up attempting to realise the Christian temper, because they have really so little scope for its exercise; Sundays and evenings would be outdone by the sordid six days of the week, when everything must be weighed in a nice balance of selfish thrift; character would be the outcome of the working hours. Again, we are told that a statesman may obey the law of love in private life, but not in national or international relations. But if he be a good statesman all his best thought is given to the state, and in the process his character develops; as he thinks and acts so he becomes. So it is also with the ecclesiastical ruler whose churchcraft is governed by the rules

that will bring the Church earthly success. In the end his character will be forged in the heat of his work, not in the quiet of his devotional hours.

Perhaps no better illustration of the prevailing temper of our Christianity can be had than in a quotation from the words of one who is one of the best of the Christians and scholars of our generation.

"Christianity — the true Christianity — carries no arms; it wins its way by lowly service, by patience, by self-sacrifice. History shows that there are no instruments of religious propaganda comparable to these. It also shows that the type of character connected with them is of the very highest attractiveness and beauty. Is it a complete type, a type to which we can apply the Kantian maxim, 'So act as if your action was to be a law for all human beings'? This would seem to be more than we ought to say. . . . If we are to say the truth we must admit that parts of it would become *impracticable if they were transferred from the individual standing alone to governments or individuals representing society.*" [1] (The italics are ours.)

If this is the highest degree of belief in the common sense of Jesus which seems possible in the cathedral close, in the most religious of our great universities, can we wonder if we find that

[1] Art. "Jesus Christ," by Dr. Sanday, Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 621. In the same Art., p. 652, the writer disclaims sufficiency for these remarks, and says they only represent such insight as we at present have.

almost every Christian individual outside that pale acts habitually as "representing society," and not as "the individual standing alone" at the judgment-seat of Christ? Yet this pronouncement of one of the most revered of Christian thinkers differs from the teaching of other Christian preachers more in its Christ-like candour, its reverence for fact, than in anything else.

Let each of us ask ourselves if we do not agree with it. With our corporate faith in God such as it is — a low average estimate of his power, a melancholy estimate of his will; with our corporate thought regarding God as the source of all our diseases and disasters, requiring that we shall look to science, not to religion, for their cure; with our minds tainted with sin, appetite and affection deranged, is it not an impossibility to live up to the standards of Jesus, to endure persecution with joy and meekness, to overcome hate with love, not only in the centre of the individual heart but also in the household, in the state, and in the world?

Here, then, we have contradictory ideals, — that of Jesus, who maintains that his is the common-sense method of saving the world, and that of Christendom, which maintains that his laws are impracticable.

What then? Shall our civilisation crumble at the word of Christ? or shall Christ be rejected? That his way of life would mean the breaking down of commerce, the dismemberment of empires, the crumbling of law and order, is perhaps the reasonable forecast concerning an untried method;

but its truth has yet to be proved. We have no experience that goes to suggest it. No considerable body of men have for any considerable length of time attempted in the power of faith to heal the sick, to restore self-control to the hysteric, to turn the other cheek, to forgive the criminal, to give the cloke after the coat, to agree with an adversary at all cost in order to avoid the tribunal of war. No large number of Christian preachers have ever urged that social and national life should be conducted in the spirit of these injunctions. We face the teaching of Jesus, as we stand at the end of the second Christian millennium, an untried path leading to an unknown region of human life. Now, when the heart of Africa, the temples of Thibet, the frozen seas, are yielding their last secrets to us, and we are liable to feel that the world has no more mysteries except in those ultimate assumptions of knowledge on which the structures of science rest, we have not even grasped the idea that the world's greatest genius, in coming to save the world, pointed to a plan for human life on this earth which, if Christianity be of God, must mould the enterprise of the future, and prove the path of discoveries more exhilarating and of greater worth than any yet unfolded to our eager eyes. Ever and anon in the Christian centuries we witness a glimpse of his ideal, illuminating the minds of certain men and women, produce some great movement forward, but it has always been quickly reabsorbed by the common lower ideal when the saint whose

inspiration lifted men for the hour had passed away. Yet the plan of Jesus still lies before the world, clearly expressed in human language, clearly exemplified in his own ministry, and, as he believed, made practical by the marvels of corporate faith which he inaugurated as God's will for man and the proper outfit of human capacity.

Even if the precepts of Jesus only mark out the path to the whole truth he came to impart, we must at the same time remember that they mark out the only path to that truth. It is also certain that we have not accepted that path. It is not a plain path; and when we hesitate to start under clouds that bar our vision of the end, our difficulty is real. The ablest theorists do not help us; and our sin as Christians has lain in our conviction that what is, reasonably speaking, impossible to man is also impossible to God. Yet we know that the deepest problems of life must be worked out in action — not only individual but corporate action; philosophy or theology is but a reasonable account "after the event." We also know that the greatest contributions to the working principles of the race before they justified themselves in practice were only stumbling-blocks to the theologian and foolishness to the philosopher. Such was monotheism when all the world was polytheistic; such was monogamy when all the world practised polygamy; such was the education of the serf; such was the freedom of the slave; such, above all, was trust in the Cross. And to-day, when we cannot see how the highest degree

of self-realisation, personal or national, can be reached by corporate obedience to the methods of Jesus, our sin does not lie in our inability to see the path, but in our determination to say we see, and to walk by sight.

CHAPTER II

THE VITAL AGE

We know how joyful, how rapid, was the spread of the influence of Jesus Christ in the first hundred years after his death. In the teeth of cruel persecution, in spite of slow travel and slow transcription, what Jesus called "the good news" lifted the crippled civilisation of the Latin world, and sent it forward leaping and walking and praising God. There have been many explanations of that first sudden growth and expansion of Christianity and of its subsequent checks and periods of stagnation. All these explanations have probably some truth. It only concerns us here to observe that, as regards the authority on which our faith rests, we have much in common with the Christians of that most vital period. Because the problems of scholars have to-day escaped from the schools and gone abroad, the authority of our sacred writings has become very much what that of the oral and written report was in that most ardent time. We, like the early heathen inquirers, find a tradition of the sayings and actions of "the Lord" which we would fain believe to be historical. If historical,

we know that its accuracy may be impugned, and we must be as careful to compare one account with another as to probe each as far as may be to the source. No other religious writings have equal significance for us. We must pierce through everything to the character and power of the actual "Lord" they present. Because it is by that character and power that we must test the truth of the record, we are not to be stopped in our longing look by the supposed sacredness of any letter or by the interpretation of any school — the one may be inaccurate, the other effete. Above all, we will not be impeded by any doctrines about God which Jesus himself does not teach, for, like the early heathen converts, we know not apart from him what God to believe in. Now, as at first, if we would seek any help stronger than self-help, if we feel any need for salvation, material or spiritual, we must, for dear life's sake, seek to find in the person of Jesus Christ a living and reliable power, who can do for us something which we cannot do for ourselves.

We turn to the Gospels and find that their main theme is a "kingdom," both present and eternal, to which Jesus calls all men, of which he is the king. This implies that he still lives in an invisible world of spirit, very near, still calls to us to enter and enjoy the kingdom, to proclaim its power and suffer for its sake. It is not enough for us now that the Church or the Book repeats the call. The edifice of the visible Church, ages old, marvellous and majestic, seemed to cant over some while ago, some part of the foundation

sinking below the ground, the door hanging loose. A better rock bottom may be touched; towers and walls may be righted, the door set firm, we hope, but in the meantime may not be sure. Many have trooped in without right of entrance, and have lived under the protection of the veil that hangs before the inner presence-chamber exquisitely wrought of holy scripture. But now this veil has been rent in the midst by learning which we cannot impugn. The glory of the workmanship may be enhanced by the rending of the poorer part, but we cannot now join the pieces perfectly. We who would not trifle with life have no choice but to run breathless into the Holy Place, each asking, "Who art thou, Lord?" and "What wouldst thou have me to do?" The two questions are one, for personality is revealed in the demand it makes upon other persons.

This condition of things is full of hope. If, in the unsettlement of the hour, we are no worse off than the early Christians, we may hope to be what they were. If Jesus Christ was not his own revelation, then the sacred canon of the Book or Holy Church could never have come rightly into being, built up as they were by men who had no guide but his Spirit. If Jesus Christ is his own revelation, now, as in the first Christian ages before the first canon of Scripture was formed or the voice of the Church unified, each man may weigh all reports concerning him, find that personal revelation for himself, and follow only in obedience to the heavenly vision. Now we may see faith

in the Christ again glow and spread like living, leaping flame. Church and Scripture, in so far as they represent him, will be reinstated.

There is, indeed, already much evidence of this purging and rapid fire of the living Christ in the field of foreign missions. To one class of Christian missionaries we would here draw particular attention, because they are in the condition of the primitive Christians. They have existed in all ages, but they are now very numerous, and give abundant testimony. We refer to certain native Christian teachers in heathen countries, who go forward with the practice of the presence of Jesus Christ as their only learning, their only means of support, and their only reward.[1] These men brave the worst persecution, they teach their converts to brave it, thinking it well worth while for the benefit that is theirs. Some heal the sick, cast out devils, and buy their daily bread with coins minted in the bank of faith. If they are deluded it is our duty to go and raise them above their superstitions; if, on the other hand, they have found a saner and more abundant life than we experience, they have discovered its vital germs in the small, uncommentaried translations of the Gospels which they carry, on which they feed, a source to which we have access, which may produce as much for us if we come with a like simplicity.

[1] See *The Holy Spirit in Missions*, by Dr. A. J. Gordon, chap. iv.; *Story of the L.M.S.*, by C. S. Horne, especially end of chap. viii.; the biography of *Pastor Hsi*, of the China Inland Mission; also missionary reports of the "Christian Alliance for Divine Healing and Foreign Missions," New York.

Is simplicity here a cant phrase? We should do well to be rid of all such; but it is worth while to observe that the attitude of mind to which alone the truth of any department of life yields itself is exactly the same in the disciplined intellect of the greatest scholar and in the honest, earnest child or ignorant learner. It is at once the earliest gift of nature to the normal mind in its unfolding and the highest result of the mental discipline of the schools. We discount the evidence and theories of a scientist or critic when we say, "He has a theory to prove," "He can't get rid of a presupposition," "He sees what he wants to see." Such comments are a slur on scholarship in any department of learning, and by them we mean to suggest just what is meant by the words, "Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter." It is not ignorance, or the subordination of the reason, that is required for faith. It is the highest exercise of reason to seek truth with that reverence which makes no forecast of the finding. It is the result of the widest knowledge to believe that unknown truth is, and is the rewarder of them that seek it. This is the temper of all true faith.

CHAPTER III

THE ACTIONS OF JESUS

To know what that understanding of God was that Jesus called "the faith that removes mountains," and to be able to exercise it, would be to recover the early joy of the gospel. No one can read the Gospels and the Acts with candid, unbiassed mind and not perceive the exuberance of delight, in spite of "much tribulation," which the doctrine, called, *par excellence*, "the good news," produced in those who received it. Our great trouble is that it is almost impossible to read what is hackneyed without reading into it whatever hackneyed gloss we chance to be accustomed to. The individual may or may not have the right of using his private judgment in reading the Gospels, but it is certain that only one man in a multitude has the power to use it. The particular joy of those Gospels, and the faith that produced it, have been almost blotted out by the effort to read into the earthly life of Jesus the most depressing convictions of the later Judaic prophets and of the writers of the Epistles who still joyfully followed their Master, and, with arbitrary eclecticism, to relegate their promises of joy to

a future state. The wailing psalms of Israel in subjection to foreign powers, and the litanies of the Christian Church in the Dark Ages, sing in our ears whenever we listen to the good news of Jesus. We look at his whole life as through church windows stained with carnal crucifixions, and are almost unconscious that the glass colours all that we see.

All that Jesus said and did is an expression of his insight into the character of God and into God's attitude to men; and what he did must have deeper significance than what he merely said. Language is only coin minted in the heart of a race; it can only express ideas that men have already consciously thought in developing their laws, their civilisations, the dicta of their schools. If Jesus Christ was indeed a revelation of God, his ministry, not his words, must be the chief part of that revelation. As well say that God could instruct the hosts of living creatures how to live by the handbooks of the sciences, or form the instincts of friendship in man by the laws of human governments, or reward spiritual attainments by the coin of earthly treasuries, as say that the words Jesus used contain the whole gospel. If "for this world the word of God is Christ," the words Christ used could be but part of his message. Although by obedience to his plain words we must be judged, it is by his actions that he asked to be justified or condemned. Instead of fixing our attention first on those actions which the consensus of the records certainly attribute to him, the Church is wont to turn our attention from

them to give final teaching on certain aspects of his pre-natal life and his resurrection to which it is less certain that he gave the seal of his own authority. The message of angels, the virgin birth, the sacrificial suffering, the ascent into a cloud in the sky — to deny the possibility of these is to assume that we have conned the possibilities of the universe, but who can say that Jesus asked to be judged by these? Yet it is from these alone that we often try to make out the lineaments of the Eternal Father. Even if we come back to hold these as undoubted facts relating to his departure from the Eternal and Invisible and his return thither, he certainly did not set them forth as our first and chief lesson. If in his ways of restoring men mind and body he has told us earthly things and we believe not, how can we expect to understand the more mysterious matters of the hidden heaven which may have been seen in the trailing glory of his advent and return?

The truth that the early Church held to be most important, the truth that in fact is most important to every Christian who sets forth to battle in the name of Jesus with the awful reality of sin and pain, is the personal presence of Jesus. St. Paul, giving a plain account of his own first trial, says, "The Lord stood with me." It is this very common experience which is the stronghold of the Christian faith. It was certainly by his works of might and love that Jesus impressed the power of his person, the sense of his presence, upon the Church, for he says very little about its importance; even in the Johannine discourses it is more often

the indwelling of the Spirit that is emphasised. From his words in the Synoptic Gospels it would be difficult to prove that his continued grace to the Church was to be more than the impress of his name, *i.e.*, his character. But the preponderance of action over speech in that record makes his personal power the one great reality of his ministry; and the ways in which he evinced it make it the one great necessity to the children of his kingdom. The last words of St. Matthew's Gospel had become, long before they were written, the first law, as it were, of Christian thought.

Among the sayings of our Lord which appear to have been committed to writing at a very early date there are two which must form a most important clue to the understanding of his character and ministry, because they give an estimate of it in his own words. One is the passage in which Jesus, with overcharged heart, upbraids the favoured cities of Galilee;[1] the other is his own epitome of his ministry sent in answer to the Baptist's doubt.[2]

It was a moment of deep emotion that produced the reproachful apostrophe to Bethsaida and Capernaum. In such a mood the deepest convictions of the heart are shown. Jesus tells us that his aim is to bring men to repentance, and that his method is the performance of those works of mercy whose character we know from the adjoining records. He does not say, "If the word that has been preached to you had been

[1] St. Matt. xi. 21–24, and St. Luke x. 13–15.
[2] St. Matt. xi. 2–6, and St. Luke vii. 19–23.

preached in Tyre and Sidon," etc., but here distinctly claims to be judged by his works. Here it is evident that he feels that his merciful works speak louder than his words, and that the ultimate sin was the hardness of heart which rejected the proofs of such bountiful compassion and power. From this passage it would appear that when he said to John's disciples, "The blind see, the lame walk," etc., he referred to physical, not, as the modern mind is apt to suppose, to spiritual, works of healing. For it is obvious that, if the cures he is able to point out to the disciples of the Baptist had been spiritual reformations, he could never, either before or after, have condemned the same neighbourhood for lack of faith; he could not have asserted, "The spiritually blind see, the spiritually lame walk," and at another time have complained that this was not the case, nor would he have expected a careless majority to be roused and convinced by the inward grace he had implanted in the hearts of a few.

This answer to the Baptist is thus of the utmost significance as containing Jesus' own estimate of his mission. It is distinctly said that the cause of the Baptist's doubt and inquiry was the report of the works that Jesus did. We may assume that their physical nature was his difficulty, for John's mind was fixed upon a purely ethical result. The tradition concerning him shows that John had rejected the common belief in a merely material salvation. National salvation consisted for him in national and individual goodness of a high order. John apparently supposed that such

goodness was in the immediate power of the people if they only would. He thought that all men who were worth anything would prove themselves by self-government to be good fruit-trees in God's garden and pure grain on God's threshing-floor; if not, they must be hewn down and burned. This is the story concerning John, and it is true to the type. The moralist is usually a man of well-developed and well-balanced mental power. He does not cry, as even St. Paul did, "O, wretched that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death"; and although the moralist of that time was certainly inclined to believe the body to be the seat of sin, and was therefore more or less ascetic, he felt himself strong enough to control such unruly desires as warred against his righteous will. The true moralist also has humility in the presence of what appears to him a greater purity than his own. Such men usually recognise that harshness is their besetting sin, although they do not see how to avoid it without lowering the standard. It is probable that John perceived that the lamb-like gentleness of Jesus was a divine quality as long as he could see that it was strictly subservient to the severest ethical standards. But a reformer like John, if he thinks earnestly at all about the material welfare of the people, regards it as a consequence of righteous living, something that would come after reformation if at all. The fact that it was the report of Jesus' healing works that caused John to inquire whether he really was the Christ, suggests that this whole business of spending time and strength in easing all who asked of their

disabilities and pains appeared to John to be moral trifling. To remove afflictions which he held to be God's discipline,[1] and that without putting the recipients of relief to any probation of righteousness, could hardly have appeared to a mind like his to be true kindness, certainly not the most direct way of evoking repentance and its fruits.

If, then, Jesus could have given an answer suited to John's desire and mental temperament, he surely would have done so. Which of us would not pity a great reformer whose light was darkened by dungeon walls and daily danger of a cruel death, and whose lion-like spirit yet reached out to desire the salvation of his nation more than his own welfare? If this situation could touch our hearts, how much more the tender heart of his contemporary, Jesus! What is the epitome of his ministry which Jesus gives to this moralist? Does he minimise his work for men's bodies by showing that his cures were the incidental overflow of compassion in cases of extreme misery? Does he say that to teach righteousness is his main work, and the other subsidiary? No. He bids the messengers see for themselves that the first result of his work is that sick men have restored to them the use of their bodily powers, and that the unfortunate are comforted by good news of God. Jesus does not even mention in his reply the casting out of demons; which was, of all his benevolent acts,

[1] One of the most characteristic notes of the more spiritual literature of later Judaism was the interpretation of suffering as a sign, not of God's hostility, but of his educative care.

the one which would most have appealed to John as having a possible ethical significance.

Since Jesus, in these two passages, claims to have his ministry and character judged by his wonderful works, it is of first importance that we should discover what he considered their essential characteristic. It has often been assumed that this was their miraculous nature; but let us inquire. In another case[1] Jesus is asked by religious men to perform a work of which the essential feature shall be that it is miraculous and beyond the power of common men. There is no evidence that it was frivolity in those who asked that made Jesus refuse their request. While it is true that no marvel can prove the power of God, because there are always two other possible explanations, fraud or the devil, men often honestly think, even in this day, that they would be convinced of divine power if they saw a "miraculous sign." Jesus calls his questioners hypocrites; but we cannot think that if he had believed them conscious of their hypocrisy, he would have taken the trouble to tell them the underlying character of the party spirit they displayed. The very passion of his denunciation proves that he saw they gave themselves credit for good intention; and a Church which during long periods has lauded the works of Jesus merely as signs of supernatural power cannot condemn their demand. It could not have been because of their personal depravity that Jesus treated this request of the scribes and Pharisees with contempt, because we

[1] St. Matt. xii. 38, xvi. 1; St. Mark viii. 11.

are told he rejected the desire of a mixed multitude for the same aid to faith with the same reproach.[1] We should surely be justified in learning from these incidents alone that it was not any miraculous character of his works by which Jesus asked to be judged, but by their other qualities of personal power and unsparing love.

There are other passages, belonging, according to many critics, to the same original substratum of the Christian evangel, which show that the miraculous element was not in the mind of Jesus a feature of his works and signs. In the commissions to the Twelve and the Seventy the command to heal disease and to cast out devils goes to prove that in respect to such powers Jesus did not think of himself as unique. Of like tenor is the passage in which he freely concedes to the sons of the Jews a like power.[2] But much stronger evidence on the point is the fact that he required a certain psychical condition in which to work — faith, individual and corporate. This prevents us laying emphasis on the miraculous nature of the work if we accept as the scientific test of a miracle that laid down by J. S. Mill — "Were there present in the case such external conditions, such second causes, as we may call them, that whenever these conditions and causes reappear the event will be reproduced? If there were, it is not a miracle; if there were not, it is." Jesus certainly taught that whenever the

[1] St. Luke xi. 29.
[2] St. Matt. xii. 27; St. Luke xi. 19.

right faith was exercised the same marvels would result.

Although critics differ as to the antiquity and authenticity of some of the passages quoted in this chapter it remains true that we have no history of Jesus, even the earliest and most scanty, that does not make his wonderful works an essential part of the gospel. The most ample tradition we have of him does not lay more proportionate stress upon his benevolent marvels than does the most meagre. If we would understand the ministry of Jesus as he understood it we must not minimise the importance of his works, but study their significance, which does not depend on the assumption that they are miraculous.

As the messenger of God Jesus went about showing how God's will is to be done on earth as in heaven. All hopes of heaven include these — forgiveness, love, joy, self-control, and health; Jesus spent himself showing how ready God was to bestow these in response to faith. This great revelation — that all wrath and misery were hostile to God's will — was necessary to knit man's heart to God; it was the outfit required for a new start in God's service. It was, indeed, the definition of service, for it had for its negative side the doctrine that all the penalties of sin — all hatred, oppression, want, infirmity, and disease — proceeded from a source of volitional evil at enmity with God, and were to be vanquished and cast out by the victory of faith.

CHAPTER IV

FAITH

FAITH is the human equipment needed for life in the kingdom which Jesus inaugurated. What is faith?

The simplest activities of the human heart cannot be known except by experience. How is it possible to teach the mind what love is when the heart is self-centred, or explain hatred to a happy child? But as far as the character of faith can be put into words, most of us would agree in saying that faith largely consists in a true estimate of those qualities of personality which, of their very nature, are hidden from sense, and the exercise of faith is any activity based on this estimate. Superstition, we may add, must involve a false estimate of those same personal qualities. (In making such "true estimate" it must not be forgotten that not only intelligence but emotion and volition are involved.)

Can we briefly consider this without being trite on a well-worn subject? Take an elementary instance. A savage disabled in a solitary place might put faith in his dog, sending him to fetch

aid. If, however, the dog had been trained into a mechanical habit of bringing aid, the reliance placed in him by his master would not be faith, but the sort of confidence we have in the properties of inanimate things and mechanical laws. He could only have faith in the dog's spontaneous action in so far as it had evinced personal qualities, and in so far as he could detect sagacity and good will from its general conduct. Hope would rise to faith if the dog had displayed these qualities in a high degree, and more especially if the man belonged to a tribe where all were in the habit of trusting to the sagacity and affection of dogs in emergencies.

Faith in the dog would involve observation, memory, and an inference of reason from what the man knew of this and other dogs. In the last analysis his faith, true or false, would be his estimate of such personal character as the dog possessed. His exercise of faith would be activity based on this estimate; and it would involve in the man courage and purpose, for despondency and lack of purpose produce a mental inactivity which would eat into the truest faith.

In this simple case we see how the man who could best gauge the qualities of his dog would himself have those qualities which make men fittest to survive, and that the faith that would sustain such a man in such a period of waiting would be most perfectly exercised when he had the best use of all his mental powers.

In this case, however, the advantage of faith would be purely subjective. It would hinder the

suffering man from sinking under despair, but could have no effect upon the fidelity of the dog. Imagine a fellow-man in the place of the dog. Faith on the part of the sufferer would not be changed in quality, although it might be in degree, but that faith would have effect upon the messenger. If he were good-hearted, the fact that his injured fellow had faith in him would add a strong motive to natural compassion. Such trust, however, could not evoke in him qualities which were not there, nor alter physical circumstance. What effect then, other than subjective, would the exercise of faith have? It would, for the hour, knit the purpose and desire of the two men into one. The more unquestioning the faith of the injured, the more responsive the messenger, the more absolute would be their oneness — the courage, the purpose, the hope and heart of the two acting as one against all opposing forces, mental and physical. Here we come on the first trace of the law governing corporate life. This more than single strength of a man at one with another is no fantastic notion, but a commonplace of daily life. Which of us, as a child, has not been toppling on some forbidden height, unbalanced, about to fall, and been made perfectly secure again by a cheerful word or the mere touch of a kindly finger-tip? Which of us has not seen a futile man made effectual in professional and public life by obtaining a good wife, who yet never appears with him in the street, the exchange, or assembly? Which of us has not been ready to give up an enterprise in which the odds were against us, and been heartened to go on by

realising that we had the backing of one other human will?

Let us here note that in thinking men this oneness produced by faith must for the special purpose extend to opinion. To return to our illustration, it is evident that the sufferer must be convinced, not only as to the ability and fidelity of his friend, but as to his thoughts and theories on the matter. The messenger might conceivably believe lonely pain to be a moral benefit. In such a case the sufferer could not have the same confidence; resignation would take the place of hope. Or suppose that the sufferer knew that his friend would regard the succour as wholly desirable, but would regard his case as of small proportionate importance compared with other manifold claims upon his attention and energy. Again he could not feel the same confidence as if he knew that the claim of his sad position would absorb his friend's attention till succour was obtained.

The occasion of faith which we have been considering is the simplest, and must necessarily lie at the beginning of all our education in faith. To lie in bodily helplessness and rely upon the aid of love is the primary attitude of mind in the most formative years of childhood. In further considering the nature of faith we must have regard to the more complex occasions of faith between man and man, and to the growth and culmination of the life of faith between men — friendship. There is, of course, in any human friendship much of that reliance which is born of knowledge. We trust a friend, in a multitude of instances, just as we trust

a stout stick or a strong rope, a ferry-man or a cab-driver, knowing enough of the properties of each to know that they will be all that we require in certain circumstances. Over and above the properties of which we have knowledge there are qualities in every man concerning which

> We have but faith; we cannot know;
> For knowledge is of things we see.

It is only that element in personality which appears to act spontaneously in which we can have faith, that element in whose actions we descry an inner unity upon diverse occasions where outward unity is impossible. In the story of Gethsemane, when Jesus says to the sleeping three, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," he evinces faith in hidden elements of character, hidden in the past under selfish rivalries and claims for reward, and now under the desertion and denial he had himself prophesied as at hand. Yet by action based on such estimate of his followers, he, humanly speaking, conquered the civilised world. Or, to take a widely different case, Leonidas and his three hundred would have been as grass before the wind had it not been for mutual faith. Every Thermopylæ the world has seen has been possible because men did at times trust men to stand against all the manifold claims of individual self-interest. The best incidents in a life like that of the patriot Hampden are the outcome of faith in the untried capacity of his neighbours to rise to new responsibilities. All measures of self-government by which the race has advanced have been the result of man's

faith in man to become something more than he has been. The best relations of life, on which the fabric of our progress rests, are built of this faith. It is that that makes the difference between the Western home and the Eastern harem.

Further, we can easily perceive, in any friendship that through a lifetime depends daily upon another's good will unbiassed by selfish interests, that as each year passes, and every energy is called into play by communion, and each acquires a closer understanding of the other, this life of faith, faith of each in the other, while engaging all the faculties men have, will at last be what it was at first, an estimate — an estimate truer and often higher, but of the same kind. And while such a friendship commonly begins with prayer — need, request, service, that only at first — at last it will not have grown beyond the occasions of need and service, even although it also means much more of mutual communion beside. The elementary exercises of faith — petition and response — will ever be more frequent, more unconscious, more perfect, when the friendship has permeated larger areas of the mutual life. The estimate of another which is the product of a lifetime of mutual understanding will be more accurate; its superstitions will have dropped off, its truth be established. It will also be different in scope, and its assurance will have permeated the whole nature, conscious and unconscious; but it will remain an estimate of the unseen personal qualities of the friend.

It will, perhaps, be said that faith is not so much an estimate of personal character as a high

estimate. But reflection shows that it requires only to be a true estimate. If a character is variable and unstable, an estimate that regards him as reliable is superstitious. To believe in his instability, if indeed he be unstable, is the only basis of right dealing with such a person. If, however, there be a degree of stability under the instability, that also must be reckoned with in the estimate. Or let us take the case of a character wholly bad. An accurate estimate of his wickedness is the faith required for dealing with him; to question the wickedness, to act upon a hope or supposition of something else, would be a false faith. For example, when Jesus said that "Satan" could not do good, he taught a faith in the uniform nature of evil as well as of good. Had the Church ceased to attribute physical goods to "the devil" she would have gained much.

But, again, it will be said that we do speak of faith as being great or little in quantity, whereas we cannot quantify the mental vision we call an estimate. But we can have vigour or feebleness in any mental process, and in all the activities based on that process. It is possible for a man to have an estimate of another which is not false and yet is shadowy compared with his estimate of himself or of forces on which he must rely. And indeed there are men who live through all the relations of life and never realise personality sufficiently to deal with persons in any other way than as they deal with variable natural forces — such as wind and weather, which a man may utilise but cannot count upon. Such a man cannot be said to have a

superstitious estimate of the character of his fellows. What he lacks is vigour of thought as applied to character, vigour of observation in mustering given data, vigour of desire for more than is seen, vigour of that fine co-operation of all his powers which fetches from the unseen something just beyond the logical inference from given data. He is a man not of false faith but of little faith. His whole nature could be employed in forming a greater faith, a more vigorous estimate, on which he could not but act.

To take an example from our New Testament: when Jesus said, "I have not seen so great faith, no, not in Israel" he was speaking to a man who had evidently exercised vigorous thought concerning the power by which Jesus cured disease. He argued that the power Jesus exercised over the health and disease of those brought into his presence was not a physical but a spiritual power, and therefore, he concluded, presence or absence could make no difference. "Speak the word only and my servant (who lies at a distance) shall be healed."

When Jesus repeatedly used his reproachful formula, "Oh ye of little faith," he seems usually to have been chiding, not so much a wrong estimate of his own character or of the Father's, as vagueness and inactivity of thought which allows the attention to be diverted from the object of faith to the causes of fear. It is clear, for example, that in the story of Peter's walking on the water, the disciple could not have altered his estimate of our Lord's power because the waves were boisterous. That estimate must have been one that inspired

absolute trust, or he would never have got out of his ship. What happened was that the grasp of his mind and will upon what he knew to be the life-force of Jesus relaxed when he gave his attention to danger; the power that union of will and thought with Jesus gave was lost because such corporate union must be mutual.

There is one very important fact to be observed concerning the quality of faith that a man exercises in his fellow-creatures; it is not determined merely by his individual qualities; it rises or falls with the standards of the community in which he lives. Here, again, we learn a law of the corporate life. For example, in a land where men habitually shut up their women, it would be difficult, almost impossible, for one man to set his women at large and never feel the slightest suspicion concerning their affections or behaviour, however trustworthy they might be. Suspicious thoughts would intrude at times, no matter how high he might at other times rise above them, and we all admit that he would be, not an average, but a remarkable man to rise above them at all. Or again, in a community where men habitually doubted the honesty of their fellows, a man who should place confidence in a friend beyond the limit of mutual self-interest would naturally be beset by inward suspicions. To hold to such a course in defiance of suspicion would perhaps be the highest degree of friendship to which he could attain.

It is very natural that in matters of faith a man should thus be greatly dependent on his environment, for he is very dependent on it for

the degree in which he realises matters of fact —fact either of sensuous experience or logical inference. Fashions in taste and philosophy change the face of the natural universe for man. One generation does not see, much less notice, the beauties of nature; in another generation, of the same nation in the same climate, we find aesthetic joy in nature common, even children and the uneducated observing the earth's beauty. In the ancient Roman world the only landscape that was admirable was the flat and fertile plain, where transit was easy and cultivation remunerative. The mountains stood for hardship and peril, and were merely ugly in their cruelty. Again, in each generation we find men actually aware only of such facts of life as fit into the philosophy of their age. Eclecticism in observation and inference is one of the most salient characteristics of the *Zeitgeist*. Hence arises the difficulty of the historian who, when he would depict a bygone age, finds that no record of the time is impartial, either in the facts it records or the inferences it makes. Nor can he be sure of arriving at the whole truth by balancing one chronicler against another, because the corporate thought and corporate prejudices of the age colour every source of information, and must, so far as they can be ascertained, be allowed for.

Now if this be the case in the attempt to observe plain matters of fact, how much more must it be the case when man seeks to exercise powers additional to those of sense and logic, reaching out to the unseen self within his fellow-man. Faith, like abstract reasoning, is a more

recently developed power than the senses we have in common with low forms of life and the sagacity we share with intelligent brutes; for that reason we are more uncertain in its exercise and more dependent on the corporate atmosphere within which we exercise it.

Another notable characteristic of faith is that even when a man bases his ordinary actions upon it he can seldom reckon up his own faith. We are all conscious at times of being surprised, in some sudden moment of insight, by finding that we trust some individual more or less than we supposed. In some crucial moment a man discovers how little he has known his own mind with regard to the comparative worth of neighbours or friends. Most of us are sincerely under the impression that we would trust all whom we have admitted to the inner circle of friendship against all appearances; but we are forced to admit that in cases where serious accusation is made, and supported by evidence to others convincing, he is a rare man who does not know the agony of doubt. When no such crucial hour of self-revelation occurs in a man's life there is a fair presumption that he may be, from first to last, unconscious of the precise quality of the estimate he really makes of his fellow-man.

Man's faith in God cannot be different in kind from his faith in man. Since it is only personal attributes that can evoke faith, faith in God is only possible when man regards God's character as in some sense "in the image" of his own. It follows that in so far as man conceives God as force, or

substance, or anything other than personal, the reliance he can place in him will be inferior to that he places in a person; it will be the reliance he places in law or in the properties of matter. We are all aware that this sort of reliance is the peril of any religious system that has the appearance of mechanical working, as, for example, a system involving the uniform inspiration of a literature, or the uniform working of certain rites and privileges. Although reliance in a salvation thus partly mechanical certainly does not exclude the highest faith, yet, as we all know, it is fatally easy to trust to such an artificial religious theory as must be composed by finding a favourite doctrine in every book of the Bible, or to trust to the efficacy of sacraments to ensure future salvation just as one would trust a cab or a ferry-boat to land one at the right destination.

But to return, our point is that man's faith in a personal God is identical with the estimate he forms of God's character by reaching beyond what he can learn of God in creation. But the estimate of faith is not independent of what we learn of God in creation. On the contrary, just as the simplest exercise of faith toward a fellow-man is based on all the data we have concerning his thoughts, his emotions, and his will, so faith in God must be based on all the data we have concerning him in the universe, which is his visible action. Even in a child, faith in God must be in part derived from the notion he forms of the universe, including of course the persons about him.

That estimate of God embodied in our faith is,

then, in part an inference of reason from what we know of nature, especially human nature, and of all the facts that bear on the religious life. But it is, even at the outset, more than that, just as a man's faith in the fidelity of a dog, or the love of a life-long friend, is more than anything that can be wrested by logical process from given data. Man's faith in God not only involves his notion of the whole of nature, but is the outcome of his whole nature. For if all that he is and does goes to make up and to modify his estimate of the hidden personality in his brother, it must also make and modify his estimate of the hidden personality of supreme Love. It can never be merely the exercise of an extra power. It is an outcome of the whole man; it is the highest outcome, requiring practice in mundane faith before it can attain to God. The well-known axiom of the Johannine epistle holds good — if a man does not put faith in his brother whom he has seen, he cannot, in any real, practical way, put faith in God whom he has not seen.

All that we have been saying is that faith is the view of God taken by the mind's eye, which was the figure used by Jesus. We may, with equal truth of analogy, speak of the light of a house being the window, or the condition in which the window is kept, or the light that shines in at the window. The light of the mind is the mind's eye, or the correctness of the mental vision, or the objective reality the mind is able to apprehend. "If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light." The leper who accosted Jesus

saying, "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean," had a true and vigorous estimate of Jesus that was only half the truth. Jesus went so far as to touch him — unheard of mercy to a leper — in saying, "I will." The touch, the word, made the leper's estimate as to power and will complete; with his mind's eye he saw one who had both power and determination to cure him. The Syrophenician had evidently made a true estimate of Jesus before she ignored his dismissal with her memorable persistence. The Roman captain had a definite belief concerning the authority of Jesus in the world of unseen power. In the particular in which these were seeking help their whole life was full of light because their sight was true.

To sum up. Faith is the same in kind whether exercised toward man or toward God, whether exercised for an hour or for a lifetime. Our power of faith is largely dependent on our human environment. Our actual faith is usually not prominent in consciousness, so that a man's notion of his own faith is not worth very much. It is probably greater or less than he supposes. Its test must be its result. An estimate of God's love and will for man which knits man's purpose to the purpose of God, and knits the purpose of each man to that of his fellows, is invincible strength — is the supreme victory of mind over chaos — is the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER V

CORPORATE FAITH

THE kingdom of heaven implies the welding of the faith of many into one. To understand what condition is needed for the highest corporate faith in God we must turn aside and consider the laws of all corporate life.

It will be seen that in this chapter we are not attempting to set forth the integrity of the individual life — a truth that is in no danger of being minimised by the modern temper. We believe, indeed, that the only philosophic basis for Christianity is the conception of personality as the ultimate factor in human thought; the belief that a personal intellect can alone interpret nature, as a personal intelligence could alone create nature. But just as we have no experience of mind except under bodily conditions, so we have no experience at all of individual mind except as influenced by other minds. It is the bearing of this fact on the Christian life which we now proceed to consider.

A race, a nation, a class, an orderly crowd, a riotous mob — these are units in the same sense in which the individual is a unit. A man's conscious

self is made up of what appears to be many selves — wills that conflict, thoughts that argue among themselves except when the voice of the leader, the stronger volition, wins a whole-hearted response. The mind as an individual whole forms a different object of study from its separate sentiments and volitions. In like manner a body of men related to each other in any way form a unit whose faculties are not the same as those of the individuals that compose it. The psychology of the corporate life is not that of the individual life. No one kind-hearted man, for example, could rejoice in the death of a stag in the way in which a crowd of hunters will rejoice in it. It is well known that very bad men in a crowded theatre will involuntarily hiss a slight defection from virtue on the part of a hero. It is not the aggregate of their individual sentiments that such men express. As an aggregate they have different sentiments from those they possess as individuals. When reflecting, they have different powers of thought from those they have as individuals; when in action, the combined action is not the mere sum of individual actions, but something better or worse.

Yet although the individual life and the corporate life may be shown to be different, they always merge into and react on one another. This chapter is concerned with the effect of the corporate life on the individual. A man has not the same mind when with one neighbour as when with another. When with them both his mind undergoes another modification. When he lives in a village his mind is modified by the pull of the common

soul of that village. When he goes up to the town the larger environment again affects him visibly if not consciously. All this has been proved so often that it needs repetition here only in order to observe that a body of men forming a church must come under the same psychological laws as govern the same men in other aggregates.

Further, it is not necessary that men should visibly herd together to experience the corporate influence. There is abundant evidence that there is a force which causes one man to think as his neighbour thinks, divided though they be by the walls of their separate houses or by miles of intervening country, without conscious communication, and without access to the same visible sources of influence, — a force as invisible but as certainly operative as gravitation. We know that every stone lying on a tract of land many miles in extent exercises a certain attraction for every other stone. We do not dispute this physical law, even though we only see the effect of its operation in certain exaggerated conditions — as, for example, when near a high mass of rock, the plumb-line hangs aslant. The present writer knows a case of a woman who very frequently awoke on Sunday morning repeating to herself certain formulas of prayer. They were not familiar to her, and were never alike two Sundays in succession. After some time she discovered that they were scraps from the Anglican collect for the day. It is true that she must have heard the collects, though she had never studied them; but she certainly had no knowledge at all of their order in the Christian year. We cannot

reasonably doubt that if the actual words of the many could thus upon rare occasion press into the consciousness of one without visible communication, the mental inclination of the many behind the words would have a much commoner, if still more subtle, effect upon the one.

The forces which govern man's corporate life are those which work chiefly upon the latent powers of his being.[1] We are only beginning to discern them. Take, for example, the fact that it is easy to teach an ignorant child of ignorant parents to-day some conception current in our decade which the most brilliant men a century ago only grasped with effort. Is telepathy the cause of this? contagion of thought or feeling? suggestibility? These are words of which the connotation is as yet imperfect, although by the realities which they denote we all live. The strength of a corporate movement among men may be terrible for good or evil, but that strength is commonly dissipated by the counter pull of other corporate movements. Thus, a man who is

[1] "What can be more complicated, more logical, more marvellous than a language? Yet whence can this admirably organised production have arisen, except it be the outcome of the unconscious genius of crowds? The most learned scholars, the most esteemed grammarians can do no more than note down the laws that govern languages; they would be utterly incapable of creating them. Even with respect to the ideas of great men, are we certain that they are exclusively the offspring of their brains? No doubt such ideas are always created by solitary minds, but is it not the genius of crowds that has furnished the thousands of grains of dust forming the soil in which they have sprung up?" — *The Crowd*, by Gustave Le Bon, p. 9.

a Freemason, a Churchman, a citizen, feels the pull of each communion; and in so far as the interests of each are different, he must not only be weaker in each but must weaken each. It is only in so far as the pull of each is good and identical with the pull of the others, that the individual can realise the whole strength of his personality, can "possess his soul." The man we have instanced cannot obey the counsels of perfection in the Church unless he is also obeying them in the State and in all other relationships. He cannot, as a Christian, act in obedience to the Sermon on the Mount, and at the same time, as a citizen, follow a contradictory code. Moral obliquity, intellectual dulness, is the inevitable result of the effort. The laws which God has made to govern mind are as certain in their operation as those he has made to govern matter. A plumb-line will not hang true plumb near a mountain; the attraction of the mountain interferes with the attraction of the earth. A man's Christian life cannot be true to the demand of Jesus if, not only his own civic life, but that of his fellows, is a deflecting mass.

We thus see that probably there is no such thing as absolutely independent thought or feeling; nor can we admit the recent theory of some psychologists that the more independent the thought, the higher its level. Although the diseases of the corporate life, *i.e.*, mental epidemics,[1] certainly show an abnormal dependence of one

[1] The following list of such epidemics is given in *The Psychology of Suggestion* by Boris Sidis: —
Pilgrimage epidemic, 1000–1095.

mind on another as their most prominent symptom, this does not prove the highest degree of mental independence to be the highest degree of mental health; as well say because men cannot live in a tropical sun that they would have the best health in the lowest temperature. The stern moralist is perhaps the highest instance of independent thought; the genius is perhaps the highest product of sympathy with the world-mind.

If there is an invisible bond of union between thoughts of saint and sinner, of Church and world, of class and class, of nation and nation, the Church can only be saved in the degree in which she saves the whole world. The whole race is corporate. A mental epidemic does not strike the Christian with one folly and the worldling with another. Out they go together, Christian and worldling, to dance the tarantella, to burn witches, to murder Jews, to invest in financial bubbles, to march to every war at the sound of trumpet and drum.

Crusade epidemic,
{Eastern and Western crusades
{Children's crusade } 1095–1270.

Flagellant epidemic, 1260–1348.

Anti-Semitic mania, following the Black Death, 1348.

Dancing mania {St. John's dance, 1374.
{St. Vitus' dance, 1418.
{Tarantism, 1470 to end of 15th century.

Demonophobia, or Witchcraft mania, 1488 to end of 17th century.

Speculative mania {Tulipomania, 1634.
{The Mississippi Scheme, 1717.
{The South Sea Bubble, 1720 — and business bubbles to our own times.

Likewise, every good movement by which the race has increased its power of compassion and practice of justice has been corporate. Slowly, surely, healthily, the racial mind has moved, permitting the same ideas to be brought to birth often at the same time in lands and societies visibly separated one from another. Legislation — which means public opinion — on behalf of the debtor, the vanquished, the woman, the child, the slave, the beast, has extended in ways that man's conscious political agitations only half explain. When we compare the religions, the ethics, the art, and science, of many and most diverse nations, beneath the differences that arrest the shallow and lead the reverent to look deeper, we find likenesses that can hardly be explained except by the great fact of corporate unity. Within Christendom progressive movements affect alike baptized and unbaptized. Compassion for the oppressed, passion to discover truth — these, whatever local and temporary aspect they assume, infect mind after mind without any distinction of creed. Therefore, since every man is liable to the infection of his neighbour's ideas, be they good or bad, wise or mad, the Church can only have a perfect faith when she has converted the world to a perfect faith; and her degree of faith in any place and time will depend on the convictions she is evoking in her environment. The "serious man" did not say to Wesley, "You must not serve God alone"; he said, "You cannot"; and the psychology of the corporate mind bears out the *non possumus* for each one of us. Jesus strictly enjoined upon every

disciple resignation to such suffering as has a directly saving effect upon the world — the bearing of reproach and tyranny in the spirit of love. He does not say that men who will not endure this redemptive pain must not count themselves his disciples; he says they cannot be his disciples. It is not possible, even to God, to give salvation to a man who is not ready in his degree to be a saviour.

All his plan for the kingdom shows that Jesus knew that individual faith is dependent on corporate faith. He gave a glad, almost a surprised, welcome, to every sign of individual faith, without criticism of its lack, and levelled constant reproach against the nation, the generation, and the religious classes of his time for lack of faith. If faith in God is the highest exercise of personal power, all history shows that the field of personal power is the corporate life. When the corporate life is at its highest, and the individual is most closely allied to it, his individuality is at its strongest and his personal powers performing their highest functions.

Thus we have seen that the faith of every individual is dependent upon the faith of his fellows, more dependent on the faith of those with whom he is in more intimate relation, but also in some degree dependent upon the corporate faith of the whole environment. The question of how far the human will is determined is not a question simply of how the sequence of states is governed in a man's own mind. If he could enter the arena of life without an ancestry, with complete will and intelligence, without a personal past, his mental condition would still be determined each moment

more or less by the mental condition of every man who treads the earth with him. We have seen that the oftener a man herds with the same crowd, the less he can resist its influence; but unless he lives, sleeps, eats, and works with it, its influence must be greatly modified by the pull of every other relation of his life. The psychic law which governs him is that even when he thinks he girds himself and goes whither he will, another is always girding him and carrying him whither he will not.

The laws of this involuntary brotherhood have, of course, lent themselves to every organisation by which men have thought to create brotherhood. Unless the race were a unity, no monastic order, no army, no family, no nation, no empire, could hold together. The thrill of patriotism or imperial spirit which passes from man to man, the sense of kinship between children that have played around one hearth, these have been evidences of the inner brotherhood of men too strong to escape notice, and are the forces that have been utilised in every organisation. Such bodies as had any particular object have used a partial sense of brotherhood for a partial end, and attained success; but organisations which have Christianity for their nexus have an interest in which all men share, a purpose which embraces every man. They have appeared to fail; perhaps because they have not sufficiently recognised that man's religious brotherhood is essentially and intrinsically universal. It is universal, whether he desires it or not, and a limiting organisation must be more or less false to the truth of this, and, although it gain its whole

force from the brotherhood of man, must run counter to its essential religious aspect.

If, for example, we have a certain sectional community in a certain town, the sect adheres by the natural laws which govern corporate life. Usually every member holds the doctrines of the sect more strongly the more he herds with its other members, and the more he endeavours to isolate himself from the larger interests of the town. Unless the isolation is complete, unless he live entirely with the brethren of the order, the full influence of the sect unit on the individual unit is not realised. Let us see to what this leads us. If the sect taught the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, if the ideal life could be lived without relation to the outer world, its organisation would then be the best training, sphere, and home for the individual. But what is the result in any organisation which has realised such complete union in isolation as, for example, some monastic orders? We are all ready to admit that the result is not the realisation by its members of the whole truth or the ideal life. At its best it may be admitted to be something which has its niche in the larger brotherhood and the more universal ideal, but nothing more. No one, not even an advocate of such an order, will contend that it is more than this at its best. At its worst, it is a pest-house of mental freaks. Thus we see that a limited union and isolation at their highest in a religious body do not produce the best type of religious brotherhood.

Let us inquire what light this throws on any

association involving some degree of union and of isolation. It proves, at least, that some relations with the outer world are necessary for religious development. The general view of the Church is that she must maintain relations with the world if only because she must exert missionary and charitable activities. She has not, however, evinced much interest in learning from the larger sanity of the greater number. She has conceived of her relation toward the world as that of teacher only. She has sought to restrict, as far as possible, her sense of companionship with the world to a sense of the world's need and the effort to supply it. Christian literature, written for those who meet the world in their various avocations, has gone to emphasise this attitude. Here we have a theory of life false to fact. The missioner, preaching to congregations of heathen or worldlings, the monk ministering to companies of vagrants, the devout lady taking her dutiful part in court or ball-room, all these return to their cloister or closet refreshed and made free from their morbid tendencies, not so much by their own activities as by mere contact with a fresh and wide mental atmosphere. As they stood face to face with men and women from the boisterous outer world, deep answered unto deep in their souls. Without volition, below consciousness, the laws of the universal brotherhood which God created and Jesus blessed worked to give them as much as they could receive of the strength of the universal mind.

That the lives of devout Christians are not regulated by the desire to obtain all that the

brotherhood of man has to give would appear to be a matter of great moment, not only because their theory puts the best of them as far as possible out of reach of the benefit of the race-soul which they ought constantly to receive, but because this theory puts the Christian out of harmony with the demand of Jesus, whose example and whose precepts are in absolute accord with the universal religious brotherhood of man.

To sum up. The laws of corporate life form an invisible and universal bond, and complete independence of individual faith is impossible; complete independence of sectional religious life is equally impossible. The corporate life of faith must fall under the same laws as govern all corporate life.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE OF PRAYER

IT was in his activities for human relief that Jesus exemplified the certain result of faithful prayer. The belief about prayer almost universal in the religious world, both Jewish and pagan, was that when man had exercised repentance and obedience and made his humble petition to heaven it still rested with the divine will to give or to withhold. This was a most natural belief so long as men regarded the divine nature as free from what we might call principles of conduct, or as possessing only such laws of character as were and must remain hidden from human understanding; but Christian writers err who assume that Jesus set the seal of his authority to it, prevalent as it was in the world of his day. In the most ancient liturgies we find this belief — that uncertainty always waited upon prayer — constantly expressed along with beautiful aspirations of penitence and faith. We have read the deciphered prayers of "Assyrian kings who compose monotonous variations upon the three themes of pride, flattery, and fear."

And this anxiety as to the result, the heaping up of argument in anguish lest the prayer be rejected, the much speaking in alternations of confidence and solicitude, are also the characteristics of nearly all the most exquisite expressions of faith in all religions. In the Hebrew psalms we are so much accustomed to this sort of prayer that we almost fail to notice it, or the profound contrast between this attitude of mind and that expressed in that psalm whose parallelism with the thought of Jesus is so striking.

The lord is my shepherd.
I shall not want. He leads me in green pastures and by waters of rest.

He restoreth my life.
He leadeth in right paths.
I will fear no evil.
Goodness and mercy shall follow me always, everywhere.

Our father in heaven.
Thy kingdom be within and around us. Thy will be done here as in heaven. Give us our daily bread.
Forgive us as we forgive.
Lead us aside from temptation.
Deliver us from evil.
All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.

All ages have been familiar not only with the ascription of arbitrariness to God by the religious, but also with their reverent method of accounting for it by assuming that the all-knowledge of God compared with the ignorance of man would frequently make God reject human petitions out of kindness, even those for forgiveness and the mere needs of life. In contrast to all this the supreme originality of the religious genius of Jesus is displayed in his insight into the uniformity

of law in the religious life. It is evident that he had pondered deeply certain natural sequences in material things on which the utility of man's labour depended; and he certainly grew to believe in the uniformity of divine will in the whole realm of personal action.

This was a new and startling conception, so new that the darkness of man's unbelief on all sides closed in on this ray of spiritual light, and even now it often seems only to flash hither and thither like a searchlight in a dark dawn. Yet it is indeed no searchlight, but a sun destined to rise in our sky. Jesus regarded faith as a cause which had a uniform effect. He argues that where the effect is the cause must be, and where the effect is not the cause cannot be. His formula, so often used, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," is an argument from the effect to the cause, addressed to the attention of all. He evidently thought it of great importance that his hearers should observe that the effect proved the cause. Such strong teaching he deals out to learned and simple, losing, it would seem, no opportunity to impress his followers. "According to your faith be it unto you." "O woman, great is thy faith (therefore) be it as thou wilt." "I have not seen such faith . . . (therefore) go thy way, thy son liveth." Again, he unhesitatingly asserts lack of faith to be the reason why some desired effect was not produced. When the disciples tried to cure the epileptic boy and failed, Jesus was not present. They had before this been away from him on missions of healing, and without his presence

had constant success. Why does he blame them now for lack of faith of which they were not conscious? He is quite sure the cause is lacking because the effect is not produced — "Because of your unbelief." This was probably another of his formulas; it was deeply impressed on the minds of the evangelists as accounting for lack of benefit. To these sayings we must add the words of advice he gave to petitioners whose hope wavered, "Be not afraid; only believe." "Believest thou? All things are possible to him that believeth." Beside these words let us lay the promises of Jesus — indiscriminate, unmodified, unstinted, mad, as it would seem, in their calm certainty — of God's practical response to human confidence. He commends faith as a sure remedy to those in trouble. He gives positive promises of the divine gifts to all who will ask in faith.

All this is something different indeed from other religious thought. Here is certainly no encouragement to love of the occasional and marvellous, no enhancing of the uncommon to prove a doctrine. Here is no suggestion that heaven must be moved out of its usual course by wailing liturgies and servile rituals. Still less have we here the doctrine of resignation to all the common ills of life as the highest form of worship that could be offered to the divine will. All these were varieties of religion that, in various extremes and combinations, had been offered to Heaven from every tribe and kindred since man first prayed, and are still offered.

The natural sequences of sowing and growing,

of earning and gaining, of clouds and bad weather, are favourite subjects in the discourse of Jesus, but in dealing with them he constantly suggests, what is well known, that the result depends on many varying conditions. The same seed may produce nothing, or little, or much; the nicest calculations of gain, or of weather, may be disappointed. But the sequence of man's personal faith in God as a good Father and the personal gift that is returned by God he speaks of always as a law that works free from disturbance, as it were with mechanical certainty. Can we, then, for a moment suppose that he regarded personality as mechanical? Did he regard the tide of spiritual life that flowed through him or through his followers as coming from God according to some psychical law which worked as it were automatically? This would be inconsistent with his intense reverence for personality, divine and human, and is on all grounds unthinkable. It is evident rather that Jesus was convinced that abundant life, volitional, mental, and physical, proceeded from the Father's will always, toward all human creatures; that this flood of life, falling like sunshine, needed but the opening of the window in man's understanding, the will to estimate God aright, the will to pray, the will to believe. Man can only shut God out; when man's heart is open the influx of divine life is sure according to the ever-active purpose of God.

The popular belief in the uncertainty of prayer was, and is, eating like a maggot into human faith everywhere. Jesus, contrary to popular belief,

taught dependence upon the absolute uniformity of God's action. His doctrine of prayer, as exemplified in his works, declares that certain of man's needs God will supply unfailingly and without delay — the gift of forgiveness, the gift of the Holy Ghost, *i.e.*, God's indwelling support of joy and power, the gift of health, the gift of sanity and self-control. Explaining God's character in his own actions, teaching it by every reasoning and figure that his people could understand, he passed up and down the land for three years, proclaiming the invariable nature of God's will, encouraging by all that in him lay — character, action, word — that estimate of God which was the only human condition needed to ensure the accomplishment of the will on earth as it is accomplished in heaven.

How reasonable is this account of the divine perfection! A wicked man looking to God for restoration of soul, a sick man looking to God for health, asks for a boon which requires only the condition of his own faith and the action of God's spirit upon his own personality. Again, to give a man power to make or find sufficient for his daily material need only requires the adjustment of a man's wisdom and powers to his environment. So far, then, as God can act upon a man's body and will and environment directly through man's spirit, Jesus taught that he would naturally fulfil man's needs with that certainty and promptitude which is seen in all natural sequence. Prayer in these matters ought, according to his teaching, to have no element of resignation, for

here resignation would be distrust of God's kindness. As to certain other contingent goods, matters of the hour, about which man, however great his sense of need, could not know that God would bestow them, Jesus taught that the Father's will was certain but the time of its accomplishment unknown. To all temporary suffering occasioned by delay there must be resignation. In these cases we find on examination that the event is a result, not only of God's action on man's individual affairs through the personal power of one or more faithful souls, but of God's action on various classes of men and public affairs, where there is no unanimous human will. There is nothing mysterious in this distinction, nor is there any mystery in the fact that while a power of choice, however limited, is granted to humanity, any action of God upon large bodies of men and different classes of men must be a matter of time, pending the acquiescence and faith of multitudes. In such action the processes are so complex that no human vision could possibly calculate and foresee results. We may take, as example, the cessation of a national persecution. Will not God avenge his own elect? He will, and that as quickly as his forbearance with the freedom of the wicked will allow. That is the gist of our Lord's teaching concerning those cases where the prosperity of the faithful depends upon the behaviour of communities and nations. There is here no more element of uncertainty as to God's intention toward man than in other cases; it presents him as never withholding of his own

accord, never considering that it is better for the suppliant to withhold a good thing, as always willing to grant a reasonable prayer and accomplishing it as quickly as a uniform dependence upon the necessary condition in mankind will allow. The perfection of the Father is to exercise his love for the unjust as certainly as for the just, to patiently wait upon the perversity of the ungodly until through, it may be, the suffering of the godly and whatever other spiritual means may be brought to bear upon their spirits, the conditions of earthly things can, in the course of nature, be ordered to the answering of prayer. The good of those who pray could not be accomplished at the expense of those who do not pray — God could not be God and act thus — but the accomplishment of God's unvarying favour toward all is contingent upon human faith; and when its accomplishment depends, as it does depend in all social things, upon the increase of faith in whole classes of men, it is divine prescience alone that can foresee the time that will be required. Resignation as to the time of fulfilment is required in the hearts of those who pray for such needful things as depend upon the action of society, but not because God ever withholds the boon. The conception of God as torturing his children for their better discipline is not part of the doctrine of Jesus.

Where in the four Gospels is there any teaching that disappointment in prayer is God's direct will for any man, either in the sense of punishment or of that prolonged discipline which figures so

largely in devotional literature? Those who enter the kingdom of God on earth are told to pray daily that God's will be done, in perfect faith that God wills for earth what is characteristic of heaven. Jesus never minimises the element of petition in prayer; he calls upon his followers to pray, not only that their needs may be met, but that their desires may be realised, knowing certainly that all good will come the sooner and the better for their asking; but when the petition passes beyond the health of the individual, soul and body, no man can foresee how long it will be ere the self-government of the social order will render the fulfilment of the desire possible.

The next great truth that is emphasised in this record of marvels is that while God will always restore to man the power and opportunity of self-government, he will never use force. We learn from the actions of Jesus that there is one thing God will never do, even in answer to prayer — he will never coerce the wills of men.

The ordinary Christian explanation of as much of the problem of evil as we can reason about, is that, for the sake of evolving creatures who should have personality at once free and good, God risks and endures all the evil that is introduced into the universe by the gift of that power of choice necessary to personality and to goodness. Accepting this, the Christian explanation of the moral purpose for which evil is allowed to exist, it follows that such a modicum of free will as man possesses is the most valuable thing, because the most costly. God must value man's freedom

above all things, because without freedom his goodness would have no higher attribute than the goodness of a stone or a tree or a sheep. Just as inanimate rightness is meaningless compared with the rightness of anything that possesses vital force, so the rightness of man with some power of initiative must be an aim of God's system of evolution higher than any other terrestrial aim. The power to choose between good and evil is the means of man's salvation, and the only means of his salvation. In so far as he is coerced he is not being saved. Salvation cannot consist in carrying out God's will — all inanimate things carry out God's will — but in doing this by choice. (We mean here by "salvation" free righteousness and nothing more.) We have no reason to suppose that it is a worse thing for man freely to choose evil than to have no power of choice. Sin, on the Christian hypothesis, proves the possibility of good in the sinner. Of the possibilities of the ultimate salvation of a man who persists in sin in this world we know nothing, but we can clearly perceive that in the loss of free will there is no possibility of salvation.

Thus we must perceive that the one thing God will not do in answer to prayer is to encroach on the limited domain in which he has left man free. The value of every man's freedom may not appear to us an adequate explanation of sin and suffering, but it is the only explanation that we have any conception of, and it is folly to hold it in any sense an explanation and not perceive the greatness and the fineness of its issues.

Where our first human records begin we find

man with that same belief in the advantage of coercing his fellows that seems to possess the whole animal world. When an animal, or a herd of animals, disapprove any action of their fellows, their efforts at coercion are prompt and violent; and so it is in human history. It is only where we find man beginning to reason from the failure of high-handed violence that persuasion may be temporarily necessary that he begins to use the gentler method. From its success we find him reasoning that it may occasionally be the more efficacious course. Up all the long, long roads by which our race has travelled from its beginnings to modern civilisation, we see a slow and gradual increase in the belief in gentler methods between rulers and their subjects, victorious nations and those they have conquered, between judges and criminals, between parents and children. Although this line of progress is so long, its advance so meandering, so slow, it leaves the reflective mind in no doubt as to the main direction in which it moves, although to realise how little we have advanced on the first human raiders, or the trampling herds that crashed through forests that fell before man rose, we have but to feel the pulse of Christendom when war is bruited, and listen to the voice of thousands of so-called Christians fanning the flame of the martial spirit.

Corresponding with this slow advance, we find in all progressive religion the higher strains of inspired poetry attributing more and more the character of gentleness to God. "Thy gentleness hath made me great," was the epitome of the

highest religious experience before Christ came; and when he taught that he himself was the revelation of the divine will dealing with man, when he told us that God was a Father, and refused even in his moments of highest indignation, or in his hour of dire necessity, to use power, he gave the lie to all that large religious mistake by which man in all time has attributed his own violence — the violence of weakness, his own mistaken notions of justice — the justice of oppression, to the god he worshipped. "The prince of this world," "the kingdoms of this world," are our Lord's synonyms for this spirit. As warfare has been necessary for the evolution of the world, we can only suppose that warfare must be necessary for the salvation of mankind until man will listen to the counsels of love and peace, just as the sins of an individual must be necessary for his salvation until he will choose the right, because in both cases only the highest result could be worth so terrible a price.

But if there is any growth in man's knowledge, if there is any progress in his character, if he has evolved any real wisdom out of his hours of reflection, if the Spirit of God has guided him, speaking with increasing clearness in the inner temple of his soul, if there is any truth in the doctrine of our Lord's divinity, man has learned that by gentleness, and only by gentleness, man can be made great.

This is the light which struggled in darkness from the beginning, which in our Lord's time was not comprehended by the darkness, nor is

yet; although we are all dimly aware that it is only to those who receive him on this understanding that he gives power to become sons of God.

But how many prayers of the pious are still directed to the hope of the divine coercion over human action! The saints have asked that they themselves may be coerced into goodness, and that their persecutors may be coerced into justice and mercy. They seem to think it most inexplicable that our Lord will not remake men so that they will not sin. If when on earth he gave men health, if he cast out their unclean spirits, if he fed them and gave wine for their feasts, why did he not do the one thing needful, and give them hearts that would not sin and minds that would not err? It is these latter boons that we in our folly desire of his power, and we do not see that just these would deprive us of the salvation he came to give.

These baffled expectations have left their legacy of negative conclusions also; for if God, when besieged by prayer, will not stay the hand of the persecutor until, by God's long-suffering, the will of the persecutor is altered; if God will not check high-handed oppression of class over class, or prevent the economic crimes that mean the suffering of thousands, and, what is more, if he will not coerce his votaries into the goodness they so passionately desire and do not feel able to achieve, then disappointed suppliants think it follows that the age of beneficent marvels is passed, that we must find some other explanation of our Lord's promises to prayer than a literal one, and regard

his benevolent marvels as local and temporary. The Church, having discovered that obedience, the patient training of himself to obedience, is the condition upon which the grace of virtue and insight into divine wisdom is granted to a man, has gone on to teach that this is the only condition on which all prayer will be granted, and also that all prayer for material benefits must be made only in a spirit resigned to its rejection. This was not the teaching of Jesus. The graces of the spiritual life do depend, because they must, upon man's free obedience to the whole law of love: all such personal benefits as are material and merely mundane, but will help him toward that obedience, are freely offered to the prayer, not of resignation, but of assurance. We cannot doubt that it was to put man in the most favourable position for receiving spiritual blessings by making his power of choice more untrammelled, as well as to persuade him that God was good — so good that obedience to him was the greatest happiness — that our Lord's ministry was characterised from beginning to end by the free gift of health and self-control and lavish means of a simple life; faith in God's good will, the assurance of faith, being the only condition. Although in this day we may have a more general spiritual insight, the corporate mind of that day was more prone to the reception of the physical gifts Jesus gave, so that this perfect assurance of faith was possible to many. We need to recover this corporate faith in the physical gifts of God.

CHAPTER VII

THE PLACE OF THE KINGDOM IN THE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

THE very nature of the struggle for survival through long world-ages emphasises in every living creature the characteristics of greed and hatred. It is, and always has been, as the individual, brute or man, fights, and as he gets, that he survives. It is true that the principle of love has always been concomitantly developed; for the individual as a unit cannot survive long except in the larger unit of family, tribe, and nation, and for the formation of these larger units love is necessary. But the unit once formed, whether large or small, survives, as compared with like units, by its capacity for greed and hatred, so that these qualities continue to be developed by exercise. The aim of these combatants is always to claim their rights or, as we say, justice. Fighting men never agree with their opponents in the application of these terms.

Jesus came to create a universal unit — mankind at one, therefore at one with God. This was his "kingdom of heaven"; and he perceived that

for the formation and coherence of such a universal unit the faculties of love must be developed at the expense of hate and greed, to the atrophy of hate and greed, in the whole race. We can well imagine that this is man's necessary development if he is not to pass, as all other forms of life have passed, destroyed ultimately by his own fighting qualities; for if a world-empire, or a church, should become universal by these latter means they must, grown lusty by exercise, be turned within as soon as there is no scope for them without — for character is formed by action and transmitted to children's children. The doctrine of Jesus was clear, that man would only be at one with God as he was at one with all his fellows. He taught that there was no atonement between God and man without perfect atonement between man and man. This was a conception of transcendent genius.

The question which Jesus must have asked of the light within him was, how this conception could be realised, how love could triumph over hatred and greed — love, with its desire to give rather than to get, and to cast down every barrier by forgiveness?

Was it possible so to manifest to the world the glorious joy of perfect love that hatred and covetousness would pass before its light as darkness before the sun?

The first expression of his ministry was the lavish gift of all that he had to give, together with the ascription of perfect love to God and the description of what would be perfect love in

man. God was good to the unthankful and the evil, and man must be good to his enemy. No eye but his own could see the glory of it. They were all stumbling and carping, like fretful children. "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" was the highest reception of his news; and the lowest, "He casts out devils by the prince of the devils." In what way could they learn what this conception of universal love was? He talked about the love of God, free and tender as a father's to a child, and found that the mind of the Church of his day was full of the observance of the sabbath and ablutions and tithings. He talked to them about love of man to man, so great that it could resent no injury, so sensitive that it could do no harm, and his own disciples responded with rivalries as to place and power.

Jesus regarded meekness under wrong as the highest exercise of love toward a blind and perverse people, and advanced this as the most undeniable argument for the power of love, an argument which must arrest their dark minds and enter their darkened hearts. To whom would they listen? Nominally, and to a certain degree in truth, they listened to their dead prophets, who had lifted up their voices and told the truth of God as they saw it, to a gainsaying people. To the profound insight of Jesus, gainsaying, contradiction, perversity, and faithlessness in those to whom the message came was the essence of persecution. It gave pain to the heart of God's messenger incomparably greater than any physical

pain. He always speaks of the prophets as suffering persecution, although many of them were not the victims of tyranny. And when had they been listened to? Only when the patriotic motive of their preaching had been proved by their suffering of persecution. Here we come on the place of suffering in the scheme of Jesus. No one — materialistic Sadducee, law-worshipping Pharisee, publican or sinner — no one now doubted the inspiration or altruism of these dead prophets. They had endured the contradiction of sinners; they had been disbelieved by the perverse generation whom they would have saved; and the moral result upon a nation of persecutors was reverence for their character and word. Here, then, in the loving endurance of persecution, was the way that every one who would advance the kingdom must pass, until the kingdom be universal. "Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for so persecuted they the prophets." And therefore he said, "It must needs be that I suffer." This does not prove that there is anything divine in suffering; it proves that love is divine; and only by suffering can love deal with men who are animated by hatred and tenacious of possession and power. The remedial power of suffering endured willingly because of the love borne to him who commits the injury is obvious; but it is the man who inflicts suffering that is saved by it, not he who endures it. To endure willingly is the one proof of love which even hatred cannot ignore. The shepherd who gives his life for the sheep is good;

none can dispute his goodness. The man who gives his life for his friends loves them so that all men say that no love could be greater. It was the antiseptic efficacy, the redemptive force, of this proof of love to God and man, that caused Jesus to put so high a value upon it. It was the force of love and courage and benevolence involved in meekness, and not mere meekness, that he valued. There are few things more foreign to the ideal of Jesus than resignation under injury when inspired by any other motive than love to him who injures. The mother, the wife, who endures the cruelty of son or husband for love's sake, shielding by patience, winning by a cheerful meekness, has every man's reverence. But the same meekness exercised in order to obtain mere peace, or some form of favour, is universally despised. When injury is accepted patiently because he who injures is infinitely dear, a god-like peace is produced; to accept it for any other reason is to cry, "Peace, peace" when there is no peace. This affords a possible explanation of the text about the two swords. When Jesus was leaving his disciples, depriving them for the hour of his leadership — a leading of which universal love was the motive — when he knew that some little time must elapse before they could so enter into the meaning of his suffering, that his peace would be theirs, and the spirit of his almighty love would inspire them, he told them to provide themselves with swords. He also said, "He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword," as though he had said, Better the sword of self-defence, even

though death be the issue, than for a man to allow himself to be struck from any other motive than that of love. Yet the spirit of the sword is disloyal to the spirit of Jesus; after Peter's brave but angry sword-thrust in the Garden of Gethsemane he very quickly denied his Lord.

There is nothing more significant of our need of Christian reformation than the fact that the only words we have to express the most prominent ideas of Jesus — love, meekness — are so degraded that many of us have no verbal translation for these ideas of his. To the Jew the lion-hearted Moses was the great example of meekness. Jesus had no use for men without a dominant purpose. It is only to such men that the kingdom is open, and only for such that its laws are operative. It is worth noting that on the few occasions where Jesus is recorded to have used the word "meek" it is in close connection with the idea of personal dominion —"The meek shall inherit the earth" [1] (an almost literal transcription of Psalm xxxvii. 11); again, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father. . . . Come unto me . . . for I am meek and lowly of heart"; [2] lastly, where Jesus is reported as applying the prophecy of Zechariah to himself, "Behold, thy king cometh unto thee meek." [3] While we still have Christian teachers who use the word "love" as if it denoted either a mawkish sentiment or an unreasoning passion, we may well be appalled as we realise that such a use proves that a large body of our people have never even caught a glimpse of the Christian ideal.

[1] St. Matt. v. 5. [2] St. Matt. xi. 27–29. [3] St. Matt. xxi. 5.

CHAPTER VIII

SALVATION BY JOY

THE highest theory that the world's rarest and best piety had arrived at before Christ came was the idea of salvation by suffering. The end was perfection; the way was pain. It is true that the vision of the mystic had given glimpses of a higher way, but this phase of insight was almost inarticulate. The seers themselves could not assimilate it to the rest of their belief; it had given birth to no creed, either in philosophy or religion. "As far as the east is from the west so far hast thou removed our transgressions from us" is the song of a soul under the influence of this rare vision; and in its light he hears the divine answer, "As the heavens are high above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, saith the Lord." Man's way was the way of the moralist, therefore the isolated rays of the mystic vision had to be put under the horn lantern of a lower religious theory. Whatever the full meaning of the teaching of Jesus, it is certain that just so far as it was above the thought of his time, and so far as it was to be the light of all future generations, just so far it

must have been partially interpreted and darkened by what seemed necessary to the world of his day.

How far he taught that the salvation of the world must come by suffering is a most vital question, nor does it seem to be difficult to answer. The end he preached was perfection; but the way was joy, not pain. If it be objected that joy as we know it is but an incidental experience to him who would attain perfection, it may be replied that so is pain. Yet pain had been accepted as a means, as a discipline; Jesus substituted the discipline of joy. Further, for Jesus perfection was to be realised in a state of universal love. Its exemplar was the God who poured forth good upon just and unjust alike. Salvation was to begin and be accomplished in a kingdom of love; and love, although the highest joy, involves costly activities in the person who loves. He gives without measure; he forgives without measure. So far as this means suffering, the salvation of the world comes by suffering — the suffering of unrequited love. Suffering is incidental and temporary, but joy is necessary to salvation and to our idea of perfection.

Joy cannot be perfect till the whole world is saved out of its separatism into the great at-one-ment of the reign of universal love. There is only one chance of winning the children of hate to the side of the children of love — it is the vision of hate in its worst colours and love in its best. This vision is only open to the eyes of men when the victim of ill-will suffers without resentment and in entire charity. St. Paul was probably prepared

for his conversion by St. Stephen's martyrdom, not because St. Stephen died for his faith, but because in dying he manifested love and forgiveness for his tormentors. Long afterward St. Paul, who must have seen many — not only Christians but Jews and pagans — die for their faith, wrote in a passage of great inspiration, "Though I give my body to be burned and have not love it profiteth me nothing." Nothing! The kingdom of God gains nothing from any zeal or any suffering which is not offered out of the depths of love to God and man.

The Christian must drink so deeply of the spirit of the Saviour that he will actually and tenderly love his brothers, his neighbours, and his enemies. All men come under one of these heads; there is no relation of life that is not covered by one of them. There is no salvation recognised in the Gospels that is not manifested by this income and output of love. This love will be more or less rejected, and the consequent neglect or ills, petty and great, that arise from the animus of persecution are the only suffering which the Christian is called on to endure. Neglect and contradiction are inevitable to all men who are saved by loving, and are saving the world by loving it; but love remains the highest joy, whatever be its suffering.

Thus we see that suffering is never to be courted for private ends. The individual can win his life only by expending his love for the sake of the corporate life, and whatever renunciation Jesus called on a man to make was to be the instrument of the world's salvation. "In your

patience ye shall possess your lives" follows close upon "Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake." Whatever is done for the sake of the King, done as the King would do it, is done to advance the kingdom. Whatever is demanded for the sake of the Saviour of the world is demanded for the sake of saving the world. We need not regard it as a mysterious question whether suffering has a redemptive efficacy; it is a fact that what love suffers in its effort to save has a redemptive efficacy, and there is no other suffering which the Redeemer regarded as the will of God. When Jesus fully perceived that there was no way of meekness and love by which he could avoid the utmost cruelty of his persecutors, no way except that of coercion by superior force, it was then, and only then, that he spoke of suffering as the Father's will. It was only then that he found a difference between his own desire and God's, and resigned his own. The cup that the Father gave him was submission to the malice of men. It was of that hour he predicted, "I will draw all men unto me;" he called it "the hour of darkness" and "of the prince of this world." The cross was the culminating expression of the suffering of unrequited love. It was the symbol of the worst evil that mankind could inflict upon man, the extreme form of shame and pain; and it was to be embraced in spirit every day because it was pregnant with the world's redemption.

At the same time the Christian does not through the pains of love suffer more than other men, and he has love's joy. Greater is the inevitable suffering

of non-Christians, who go on under the law of a lower stage of human development trying to save themselves at the expense of others by individual or corporate gain-getting and warfare. These do not expend their lives for others and thus save them; they save their lives at the expense of others and thus lose them. Such a life brings its own inevitable loss, losing itself in the mere act of getting and fighting, by the gradual shrinkage of those powers of love by which man can enjoy either himself or his fellows or God. The punishment or destruction or loss of those men who seek to survive in some limited unit of family, class, or nation, is that they go on exercising those powers by which alone their unit can rise in relation to other units. They are not to be punished — they are punishing themselves; they are not to be cast out — they are outcast. This was certainly the doctrine of Jesus — that to pass from the restricted unit, which flourished temporarily by hating and getting, to the universal union of God and mankind, which flourishes now and eternally only by loving and giving, was to pass from death unto life. To say this is to say that light came by the transcendent insight of Jesus. In order to see that light clearly we need to untwist the many strands of our conventional thought.

Let us take the various reasons why love must be unrequited in the world.

Love is possessed by an unquenchable thirst for perfection in her object. A man, if he be tenderly attached to father, son, brother, or friend, cannot allow in him any course of conduct inferior to the

best without endeavouring to change his course by every means that promises success. Even when love is pure and strong, and uses only good means, the yoke of love will seem irksome to the object who prefers an inferior course of action, and consequently something less than love in his friend. Natural affection, sympathy, appreciation, confidence, delicacy of touch — these are the signs of love in its outflow, but they may exist without love. These signs of love without the core or heart of love's intensity in them make less demand, and they are therefore often preferred by the indifferent, by whom love is seen as unlovely, spurned, and put to shame. There is always something akin to shame in the suffering of unrequited love. This is what the Christian must suffer from the indifferent.

It is in her natural outflow of affection, sympathy, faith, and a sensitive taste, that love suffers; therefore love that is weak out of cowardice puts on foreign qualities, an armour not her own — hardness, stupidity, distrust, pride, and vulgarity. These have no affinity with love, but weak love hides behind them. When strong love, exercising its own qualities, comes in contact with weak love, protecting herself by weak devices, the contest between them is very grave. The weakest love has a tenacity and intensity which indifference can never have. It delights in, but fears, the methods that strong love must use. Thus we get the conflict between one right and another, and we have the borderland where jarring missionary effort almost merges itself into petty persecution.

Here, again, the strong love must suffer most. When, for example, the relatives of Jesus thought that he was beside himself and desired to withdraw him from publicity, their motive, no doubt, was love. Love was St. Peter's motive when he spoke the remonstrance against the forecast of the cross. Love may have been Martha's motive when she would have called her sister from the feet of Jesus. The divergence of method between love weak and fearful and love strong and brave is enough to cause the endless division which our Lord foretells where concord ought to reign — father against son, mother against daughter, etc.; and in this there is no working of ill-will or the motive of positive hate. Here, again, the more Christ-like the love, the more it is repulsed and hampered; and this is again an aspect of the Christian's cross.

But the worst ill-usage of love comes neither from indifference nor from love's own weakness, but from the outflow of the religious man's evil will, and that cruelty in him that arises from hatred. Impelled either by some evil power outside that makes for unrighteousness, or by the brain tendencies which he inherits from the long ages when he subsisted by robbery and violence, religious man has ever felt it right to interpret God's love by his own harshness. Thus he comes to think he does God service by despising or bullying or slaying his religious opponents. We have a legion of conventional Christian sophistries which insist upon calling everything which is not love by that sacred name, and speak of universal love in terms of opprobrium.

It is unlikely that such confusion of thought concerning Christian love could have been arrived at had it not been for the ferocity with which the Almighty was credited in attitude and action toward non-Christians. The ultimate fate of the non-Christian was painted by the early Church as very black indeed. This was only natural. For many centuries religion, both of Aryan and Semitic source, had dealt with tribal and national deities whose attitude toward the enemies of their people was vindictive. All literature was full of their triumphant cruelties. As soon as the Christian Church had visible demarcation such hereditary ideas fell into line with Christian thought, especially when persecution presented a sore temptation to reciprocal vindictive treatment. The words in the Gospels which adumbrated undefined notions concerning the region of departed souls were interpreted with ignorant literalness. When such a vast difference between the immortal condition of the Christian and the non-Christian (or more especially the pervert or excommunicated person) had been definitely established in common thought, it was necessary to common sense to believe that all well-disposed persons were Christians. If a man had a brother or friend, or even an enemy, who had done nothing particularly heinous, nor aroused the ire of ecclesiastics, it was uncomfortable and unintelligent to suppose that God would put him to eternal torture. The result of this was, not a larger charity, but to degrade "Christian love" by making it cover whatever attitude of mind average

Christian people evinced. It was well known that Christian love was a necessary attribute of the Christian. This knowledge was an abiding testimony to the impression Jesus had made. Even when the flame of this love died down and flickered in the socket, when the smoke and stench of every other sentiment went up from the Church, they must all be called love. The inquisitor must be thought to love his victim; the crusader must be held to have charity for the man he so wantonly slew; and every respectable form of crime must be held to be compatible with Christian love.

We have, too, the very confusing fact that these travesties of truth are not wholly untrue. So near do hatred and love lie together in the depth of our life that it is almost impossible to distinguish the activities of the one from those of the other by any merely moral test. Nor is it possible for moralising man, calling both moral, to fail to attribute both to God. That is why the example that Jesus set of absolute love in very life and deed is so needful. It is by neglect of this guide that confusion has come about. In our hearts we have what appears to be a common source of missionary spirit and persecuting zeal, bitter waters and sweet coming, as it were, from the same fountain. But there is nothing of which Jesus seems more sure than of his principle, expressed in various ways, that when the fruit is bad the root is bad; that good, so mixed with evil in conduct, is separate from evil in the will.

Cruelty can never be the fruit of love. If we let go this principle of Jesus, that the good will

brings forth only good, we are in a labyrinth that none may thread, for persecution always derives its greatest strength from a sense of right. The persecutor not only believes that the man he persecutes is wrong, but wrong in such a way that it will be for his benefit to be annoyed or grieved, if only it makes him change his course. "Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" states the very *raison d'être* of religious warfare. It may be truly said that no frivolous man is a persecutor, and that there does not live on the earth the conscientious man who would not, under certain circumstances, be strongly tempted to persecute.

Although, in a certain superficial modern view, persecution has come to signify something so ill-judged that it is supposed no reasonable person could have recourse to it, we shall always have the persecutor until the kingdom of love is universal; and the children of the kingdom will suffer at his hand. We often think of persecution as tending merely to bring an undue odium on the persecutor and an undue glory on the persecuted; we say to-day that to suffer persecution amounts to being willing, at the cost of some slight inconvenience, to purchase undeserved notoriety and sympathy; and we suppose that, as Christians, we have attained to such a degree of civilisation that serious persecution of the righteous has become impossible. We virtually assume that the blessing of Jesus on the persecuted has no modern significance. Reflection will show that human nature has not materially altered since the first dramatic record we have of

the characters and actions of men and women. In the earliest Semitic romances and legends, in the Greek tragedies, in the poetry of the Dark Ages, in the drama of the Renaissance, and in the modern novel, we have substantially the same men and women, loving and hating under different conditions, but with the same practical result. The outward exhibition of persecution must needs be very different in different times; but as long as men hate one another the licensed cruelty of persecution will abound.

To-day, as a usual thing, we do not maltreat our religious neighbours in any material fashion, although place, power, and wealth, or the strength of numbers, are sometimes used privately to penalise an objectionable form of religion. Persecution is thus outwardly softened, not because the spirit is unwilling, but because the flesh, through a recent acquisition of imaginative sympathy, is weak. Probably, through that same increase of sensitiveness, good men suffer as much now as ever from persecution. Our governments are now democratic. To disturb the religious privileges of our neighbours, or increase our own, we must have recourse to the methods of the demagogue. The eager imputation, public and private, of unworthy motives, evil passions, despicable actions, to our opponents; the stirring up of strife, for our own religious ends, between two factions in a village, between two neighbours in one terrace, between two children in one school — who can tell the lingering pain of wounded hearts and narrowed lives that this entails? If it does not produce

widespread spiritual suffering of the most acute sort we are sunk low indeed, sunk lower than anything that we can call Christianity. But, in truth, the pain is terribly real to every heart inspired by the love of God.

Although the suffering of persecution was necessary to teach the world what the kingdom of heaven really was, that kingdom was not presented as dreary but as full of joy. Jesus said, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and cast you out of the synagogue, and hold your name a synonym for evil, because you exemplify my character which is love." And love, whatever it suffer, is the greatest source of joy. The child of the kingdom was to be the recipient of all other joys. Jesus does not say, "Blessed are ye when attacked by disease, when bereaved of dear ones by premature death, when fortune has deserted you, when you are distracted by a thousand and one domestic cares — some one's insanity, some one's folly, some one's helplessness." All these forms of suffering were to be cast out of the kingdom. In the kingdom the mourner is to rejoice, the poor to be rich, the rich to be poor; the heartless shall weep for the sorrows of others; the sick are to be healed; infirmities of will are to be cured; food and clothing are to be secure.

If Jesus had taught that to mourn for any and every cause in this world brought a special blessing on character and special comfort in the next, his own actions would have been quite inconsistent with his teaching, for he turned mourning into gladness in every case when the opportunity offered.

If a sense of bereavement, caused by premature death and immature faith, were desirable for the strengthening of character — to make God and the things of God dearer, why should he have given Lazarus back to Mary, who had already drunk so deeply of his own teaching, or restored to Jairus his little daughter, or interfered, apparently without any request, to dry the tears of the widow of Nain? If to be laid aside with sickness teaches men lessons of virtue and a knowledge of God which they can learn in no other way, or if sickness in one member of a family brings out the highest characteristics of pity and service in the others, why did he abolish this means of blessing in a thousand homes? If the sight of a lost mind is desirable to teach intellectual humility, if to bear with the ill-balanced and uncontrolled is good for the spirit of man, why did he spend so much time and energy in the casting out of devils? Nor can we acquiesce for a moment in the doctrine that he did these things to establish the fame of his divinity, and not to exemplify the eternal attitude of God toward man. For if he was indeed divine, these things must exemplify the divine dealing with men, and if he was not divine he could not wish to claim divine power. If, again, it be argued that this was his way of exalting his message, which did not deal with material gifts, we must reply that nothing can exalt a message that is not in absolute harmony with it. If he had taught that there was a virtue in mere poverty, in want as want, how could his early followers have even imagined that he would provide a lavish banquet for the wedding

feast, or spread so plentiful a meal in the desert?

The Holy Spirit, with whom the disciples of Jesus were to be endowed as far as they had faith to receive him, was to be manifested in a sense of God's perfect forgiveness and blessing, in an overflow of wisdom and gentleness and good will, and also of physical health — health sufficient to heal others. How great would be their joy! Health is a keen relish to the varied feast of life. Perfect health of body and mind is not only strength but also temperance in every feeling and every pursuit. If we accept the lesson the historic Christ taught, we must perceive that this great physical joy underlay the joy of the Spirit, the imparting of which was the glory of his message.

The rejection of a vice, and of all that feeds or tempts it, may be — often is, by a stretch of language — called salvation by suffering; but in the application of that term to it there is no sense of proportion, no common sense; for continuance in vice means greater suffering. For example, we read to-day of thousands of Chinamen eagerly curing themselves of the opium habit, destroying costly pipes, and quantities of the drug itself, in symbol of their complete conversion. Is their relief from this craving, their return to a wholesome life, a sorrow or a joy? They themselves answer, "Joy." Every drunkard, every slave of any vice, who testifies to the sudden reformation which the command of Jesus to cut off the offending member so exquisitely describes, echoes the word "joy." Asceticism would have given a

different command. "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, punish or mortify it every day of thy life." The faith of Jesus always leaped forward to meet the joy on the other side of heroism, with perfect confidence in the power and will of God to make the promise good.

If in any case Jesus had intimated that misfortune came from God, that sickness was more desirable than health, or mental infirmity better than the power of self-control, the whole gospel would have been other than it is. He did not regard depression of spirits, from any cause, as salutary, for he promised to give his followers a constant joy, and he commanded them to wear a cheerful demeanour which would hearten others; he commanded freedom from care. There are indeed no griefs, no forms of pain, to which Jesus calls men to resign themselves except those which result from the hostility of men. Such pain is to be embraced in joy because of its rich reward.

We have seen that in the doctrine of Jesus the end to be attained was perfection, that perfection to his mind was synonymous with love and also synonymous with God. To be perfect was to be like God; to be like God was to be like a loving father who comprehends the just and the unjust, the good and gracious, the unthankful and evil in his unceasing benevolence. Participation in the joy of God, transcendent yet immanent in all nature, is the dynamic force which alone can raise the Christian to this altitude of love. Joy makes a man magnanimous, gives him courage, gives him hope, gives him the strongest motive for

imparting to another. The first real taste of the joy of God comes as the wine of life, and lifts a man above all littleness, all discouragement, all his inheritance of dim animistic fear. In the conception of Jesus it appears that love, even under the most extreme misery of rejection and persecution, has in it more joy than sorrow. Just as the soldier in dying may rejoice that he dies for the sake of his country, so the Christian in suffering torture and contumely for exercising love has more joy than pain, because he suffers for God's sake. But in the Christian's case there is another element of joy which the soldier has not; the Christian loves the enemy or persecutor who inflicts the suffering, and is taught by Jesus to believe that that love will not be wasted, but will be a force in the remission of the persecutor's sin.

The cross which the Christian must take up daily is the suffering of love. The life he must lose, the denial of his own ends that he must practice, are all included in the activities and consequences of that love for men which he must drink in with the Spirit of God. Other suffering Jesus does not enjoin or bless. Other pains exist as sin exists. From them, as from sin, Jesus offers salvation. Further, the one form of suffering that he blesses, the suffering of unrequited love, is not blessed because it is suffering — not at all — but because it is the quickest way to bring the whole world into the paths of love and joy which lead to perfection.

BOOK II

THE FATHER'S HOUSE

CHAPTER I

THE CONFLICT OF THE PHYSICAL AND MORAL

BEFORE we can realise how hard it was for the high conception of salvation which Jesus taught to obtain possession of the developing world-mind, we must examine the history of the earlier idea that man's salvation has to come by suffering.

After religious systems had been developed, and before the Christian revelation, we can trace two tendencies in the evolution of human thought with regard to the unseen: the state in which man, whenever he did not feel any disunion with the forces about him, had the sort of happiness that the animal world evinces, and whenever he suspected himself of being in need of reconciliation with unseen power, used an easy method of ceremonial reconciliation which set him at ease; secondly, the state when man began to doubt the efficacy of this method. These tendencies of thought, representing two stages, are still traceable in the religion of the civilised individual to-day, and form a curious problem for the psychologist. From the religious history of the world, as far as we can read it now in the

traditions and writings that have been handed down in all nations and in the unearthed records deciphered in the last quarter of a century, it seems clear that all different tribes and nations did go through these transitions, although they are indistinctly seen because the men of higher insight in any nation are, in mere point of chronological development, ages ahead of the mass of their fellows, and those in the rear are not less prolific in religious expression. The first stage may have given rise to the myth of early innocence present in more than one legend of the dim past. St. Paul seems to have been familiar with the same sort of idea, to which the thinkers of his time had come, not by history but by reasoning, viz., that before the inward moral law was perceived, the race, like the child, must have felt itself innocent.

We first meet our fellow-man conforming to a series of enactments which gave him a very large area of conscious obedience and a joyful sense of his god's approval. These enactments were for the most part non-moral; religion meant that the god had made a covenant to approve and aid man as long as man kept them; when they were broken the question of motive did not enter at all into the matter; the breaking might have been inadvertent, it might have been unavoidable; but the guilt had to be atoned for at once by certain ceremonies, or the quality of guilt spread like physical infection to the innocent family and race. All guilt was crime; but crime was, on the whole, in early times some-

what recondite; and whatever was not crime was blissful innocence. Atonement was made by simple ceremonies and a gift. Cain's sacrifice was at one period amply sufficient; but, with a deepening sense of the gulf between man and the unseen powers, it became necessary to offer a life — not a death, but a life. In the Semitic races it became gradually established that the life was in the blood, and blood was offered, but surely with no idea of pain, as almost every sacrifice involved a feast, and the idea of putting the animal to death by torture to make the sacrifice more acceptable was unknown.

Satisfaction in life is marred by the growth of the sense of personal responsibility — the effort after an ever-receding ethical ideal. On the first suspicion any man anywhere has that he is morally, not merely ceremonially unclean — actually, not merely legally, a sinner — perfect joy in physical strength and beauty is gone; art ceases to be happy and loses its first perfection. He goes on to realise that there is in his members a law of sin and death — sin of his own deep essence, a real "ought" within which he cannot satisfy by obedience to any code, and which would not be appeased by offering anything external to himself to any deity who could accept such offering. Then falls upon that man the shadow of conscious sin. The sunshine of nature was darkened long before the hour of Calvary. Blight comes with lack of sunshine; the first blossom of naturalism withers; efforts after beauty and harmony bear less fruit; music is plaintive; every honest rep-

resentation of the awakened human life is satiric or tragic. In this man, and with cumulative strength in his children's children, two opposed passions rise and grapple together, like Jacob and the Angel of God, the material man demanding material good, the moral man demanding the unison of might and right — the legitimate demand of the body upon a faithful Creator for the unalloyed delight of its every sense; the ever-growing demand of conscience for moral perfection. The existence of the body and its senses stands, must always stand, for a real, if unrealised, covenant of faithful creator with sentient creature. The physical nature is not responsible for existence, and claims, therefore, with unerring instinct the right of realising every natural hope — a right that no sophistries can diminish. The increasing imperative of the moral nature demands harmony between the real and the right, demands that the material world, the body, the universe if need be, shall be sacrificed to the "ought." We see these two inappeasable passions strive together in the long night wherever in the world man rises above mere material joys and primitive ceremonial. The Angel of the Lord grapples with Jacob and sets him on his way halting. Everywhere, in all nations, the moral standard rises, or the race perishes; but as the moral standard rises, the physical nature is lamed. The early delight in mere living fails, leaving only a poetic tradition of man's first paradise, his Golden Age — a source of longing, an infinite regret.

There is no reason for regret. The non-

moral man who could eat, drink, and be merry whenever he had no cause for fear, and who when afraid could satisfy his gods perfectly by the very ceremonies of eating, drinking, and being merry, who was content to die on the morrow without a thought of an after that was not fulfilled in the life of his tribe — this man did not persist. The halt creature, the moral man, was fitter to survive, did survive. Wailing out prayers, singing penitential psalms, crying after a God who desired righteousness, not of ceremony but of the thoughts of the heart — this man grew and multiplied, and built greater cities and framed better laws; but physical beauty palled on his taste; his arts reflected his grief; unaffected joy was lost. In this transition the earlier Vedic tribes add to the worship of their cheerful gods the cult of the gloomy fakir; the golden calf of the dancing Semite is given up for the ark of the covenant which it is death to touch; the sunny pantheon becomes the gloomy, if more beautiful, Gothic sanctuary where the light of heaven may only enter stained by carnal crucifixions and bloody martyrdoms. Though the moral man was stronger than the non-moral and superseded him, he had plucked out an eye, he had cut off the member that offended: halt, maimed, and with one eye, he entered into life — otherwise he would have passed, as all that is unfit passes. Before man could dream of a further perfection he must learn to prize virtue before all things.

Before he can attain that further perfection, man must find out how to be good and whole-

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hearted at the same time. The body cannot be filled with the fulness of the Lord until it resume the physical perfection of unspoiled nature. Even in the childlike symbol of primitive ritual, nothing maimed, broken, or blind could be offered to the Lord; how much less in any real sense can the God of nature inspire with the beginning of a perfect and progressive righteousness a race that has lost half its power of enjoyment, that corresponds with its environment so imperfectly that the individual must always be cherishing his soul at the expense of his body, or his body at the expense of his soul.

When Jesus began his ministry the whole religious world was practically divided into two minds and two tempers. The poor in spirit and the meek were busy crying, "Blessed is the man whom God chasteneth;" while, on the other hand, those in every nation who in mind and temper were not poor in spirit, but yet were concerned for salvation, still clung to legal devices which became more and more elaborate. With these latter the explanation of suffering was still that it was the punishment of sin: "This multitude that knoweth not the law are cursed," is the epitome of the moving sermon attributed to Moses in Deuteronomy. The way to escape it was to be sinless; the way to be sinless was to conform to a legal code. As suffering was the direct punishment of immediate sin, there was no need for an uncomfortable degree of compassion for those who suffered. To draw back the skirts and pass on was legitimate to priest and lawyer;

and as long as personal suffering was escaped the faithful legalist did not anticipate it: he thus got rid of compassion, compunction, and apprehension; he thanked God that he was not as other men; he said that the people that knew not his law were cursed. But, as we have noted, this was no longer the only interpretation of suffering. The idea of salvation by suffering had been welded into the heart of the better sort of pious men everywhere by the development of conscience that rendered mere animal joy insufficient, by the teaching of the prophets, and by the imperative demand of human reason for a soul of good in things evil. The refining result of suffering upon the character of the sufferer is the first benefit to be extracted from the mystery of pain. This result is obvious, it has been noticed by all people whenever a race has reached the stage of moral reflection. Such a plan of salvation was familiar to the Buddhist, to the Hindoo, to the Persian, to the Alexandrine Greek, and, above all, to the pious Jew of the Christian era; the large use made of chastisement for the moral interpretation of experience in the books of the Apocrypha and the Apocalyptic literature is very striking.

This distinction between the two classes of pietists was very clear among the Jews at the time of our Lord, and other Semitic religions were going through the same phase. The two classes of religious thinkers were like antiphonal choirs, and their views were alternately contrasted and confused in the national psalms that went up to

God. We cannot doubt that the Father, pitying his children, accepted the worship of both; we cannot doubt that they who mourned for sin, the meek and lowly, who looked to sorrow rather than to law as a means of grace, were on a higher plane, more blessed because more ripe for comfort, more ready to inherit the earth and possess the kingdom of heaven.

All the time, even through the long past in which these different ideas of salvation had been growing, apart from the fire and apart from the whirlwind, there had been another voice, proclaiming a God of greater power and more resource, whose ways were higher than man's ways as the heaven was higher than the earth, a voice so still and small that it obtained little authority with men till Jesus came to give it authority. This was his news—that not by legal obedience, nor yet by grief, could men learn to know God, but by the dynamic power of his joy. To him the salient characteristic of God's kingdom on earth was that they that mourn should rejoice. He perceived, as others did not, that a contradiction was involved in crediting heaven with the fire that consumed the sacrifice.

CHAPTER II

THE USE OF SIN

THERE is a large tendency of thought which, in order to ensure God's omnipotence and moral character, seeks to regard moral evil as a good means to a good end. We are here assuming — what was the belief of Jesus — that for any man to choose the lower instead of the higher path is a wrong to himself, to mankind, and to God. This, however, is not to assert that the spirit of good may not borrow some advantage from things evil.

But the idea of sin as a saviour is not satisfactory. St. Paul says all that can be said as to the place of sin in God's scheme of salvation: the moral law, which makes sin, is a schoolmaster that brings men to God. Without a law there is no sin; without sin there is no knowledge of the eternal demand for a course of right action to which men cannot, of their own powers, attain. What is it that drives most persons at first to any experience of God's grace? Is it not the burden of sin? Some saintly people there may be who enter the kingdom and grow strong therein without such transgression of the law of inward rectitude as

drives them to demand of God some personal assurance of forgiveness and help; but if there are any such they are very few. The overwhelming majority of the devout have found God at first, and most constantly, and in some crisis have experienced the deepest knowledge of his self-revelation, because of their sins. As Julian of Norwich shrewdly remarks, "For it needeth us to fall, and it needeth us to see it. For if we never fell, we should not know how feeble and how wretched we are of our self, and also we should not fully know the marvellous love of our Maker. . . . And by the assay of this falling we shall have an high, marvellous knowing of love in God, without end." [1] We have many saintly authorities on this gracious utility of sin; but we may turn to the highest. When Jesus confronted the Pharisee with the riddle of the two debtors, he virtually said, "The greater a man's sin the greater his love to God"; and if we would partly explain this away by making consciousness of sin, and not its abundance, the cause of man's love to God, we still cannot get rid of the fact that Jesus in this parable still speaks of sin as the root out of which this sacred growth of worship springs. Or take the inverse truth, which he taught most strongly, that God's heart goes out after the sinner because of his sin, and God's saving energy will not be baffled in revealing itself to those who are lost, although it may fail to save those who are a law unto themselves. It has not been the fashion in the Church to dwell on the godly utility of sin; if it were, we

[1] *Revelations of Divine Love*, Chap. 61.

should all be taking note of the enlightenment which has come to our souls through our sins, and writing of it in our memoirs.

Another consideration with regard to sin is that in the concrete there is no clear line of distinction between moral good and moral evil or between moral and physical evil. That there is a vast difference between certain goods and certain evils does not diminish the force of the fact that there is no boundary-line except in thought. We are therefore bound to accept sin as a factor in the moral progress of man. Take, for example, the case of a primitive tribe of men whom we may suppose to have risen above the sins of killing members of their own tribe without due offence, and above cannibalism. Some cataclysm of nature inflicts famine upon them. They suffer evil acutely in its three forms,—pain, the ugliness of physical ruin, and the relapse into the brute. They fall to killing and devouring one another, and by so doing they survive and rise again in better times. Their behaviour is that of a herd of beasts who, when similarly put to it, would similarly preserve themselves. Can we say that if it is right for the beast it is wrong for the savage? If the savage has that glimmer of moral light that makes it wrong, are we sure that the animal has not? It is wiser to admit that we have no knowledge that warrants such inference? Again, can we say that when any human society, visited by calamity, falls from better to worse, there is no moral evil as part of the cause? Can we in such a case make any distinction between the evil they do and the evil that is thrust upon

them? Good and evil, physical and moral evil, are here welded together. If we try to apply the religious idea and ask where God's will is in harmony with his creation and where it is violated, we must perceive that many of our conventional ideas have little basis. The position of the community in our city slums; the condition of every child born and trained in their depraved atmosphere, is analogous to that of the primitive tribe in point of moral responsibility. The starving child who steals a loaf and survives is probably fitter to survive even for moral ends than one who shows less resource and dies. In such cases our moralists are wont to point out that the bad behaviour thus thrust upon each generation was first the behaviour of their ancestors. This, however, cannot be urged of the primitive tribe we have cited; and the likeness between the childhood of the race and that of each generation in respect of moral behaviour is so close that there is a strong presumption that a distinction not found to be actual in the one is not actual in the other.

The religious mind which calls its God the creator and sustainer of all, must face the fact that in the extricable confusion of good and evil his sustaining activity must be engaged. God's purpose is, we believe, the advance of man toward a positive good that will overcome evil. The mere negation of wrong can have no value for him. The man who sins is higher in the scale, more approved of God, nearer to the divine nature, than the vegetable or animal which obeys God's law perfectly because it cannot do otherwise. How

beautiful to us, how fresh and strong, does this dutiful aspect of nature appear! Yet the man who can choose between right and wrong, and chooses, even if he choose wrong, is still above all enforced good. In religious fact, as opposed to religious theory, sin, although only a bad bye-product of free will, is a stepping-stone to higher things. It has a degree of good in it. It must be, in some sense, God's will. It is used by God as a means to work out his own purposes, as the lives of the greatest and best men all show.

Can we, then, argue that God sends sin for our salvation? to bring us to himself? "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" We exalt the saving grace of pain in our religious biographies; shall we exalt the saving grace of sin also? As a matter of fact, we lose hold of the strong common sense of all true religion when we do this; we cease to be pure in heart and cease to see God.

This has nothing to do with the metaphysical argument by which evil may be proved to have no reality. We are not dealing with the problems of metaphysics but with the facts of life, and such fair inferences from them as may tend to correct our conventional estimate of God.

We have seen that while there is a sense in which sin is part of God's plan for man's salvation, we refuse, and rightly, to regard it as God's will that any man should sin. Have we any more justification for regarding it as God's will that he should suffer?

CHAPTER III

THE USE OF PAIN

THE grave difficulties attending any attempt to reconcile belief in God's universal providence with the almost universal existence of sin which we believe he must abhor, remain unsolved; meanwhile it does not make the problem of evil simpler to represent God, while hating sin, as actually visiting pain and grief upon sentient creatures. It would seem more reasonable to think of a good God as abhorring suffering in men as he abhors sin, and actually working with man always for joy as he does for righteousness.

It is clearly necessary for the religious man to regard a personal God in two aspects — as taking the responsibility of omnipotence for everything that takes place, and as, at the same time, exercising a preference and governing all things for the advantage of what he prefers. For example, the monotheist must regard sin as within God's will for the world; and if he be also a moralist he must also believe that God prefers righteousness, and ordains all things for the advantage of his preference.

In other words, there is an aspect in which we must believe, if we believe in an almighty God, that he is responsible for every sin and folly in creation; that, having an end in view which is worth the price to be paid in sin and folly, he has counted the cost and pays the price. In that same sense pain and misery must, of course, be laid directly at God's door. A father sending his son into the school playground knows that many a cut and bruise will befall him—a broken bone, perhaps, or an infectious disease. The end in view is worth the risk. But it would involve a very different kind of father to give the child intentionally a cut or bruise, or break one of his bones, or infect him with a disease, and very much the kind of father who would lead his son into vice. Looking back, we find that it is a mere matter of history that the nations who have affirmed God's willingness to risk sin and denied his more direct will to bring it about, have progressed, and the nations that have not made that distinction have passed away or are awaiting some new impulse of life. It behooves us, then, to consider whether further progress does not depend upon recognising God as the author only of delight as he is the author only of righteousness. Familiarity has led the modern religious mind to assume an extraordinary discrepancy in God's ways, to suppose that, while sin in man is not of God but purely evil, pain, though the consequence of sin, is God's will, and therefore purely good. The belief that God can suffer but cannot sin is not enough to justify this.[1]

[1] See Appendix A.

We are faced with the need for a new movement forward: the temporary resting-place which the religious mind gained by shutting off moral evil only as contrary to the will of God is ours no longer; moral and physical evil merge indistinguishably into one another, and contradiction must enter into our conception of God's character as long as the religious mind makes him directly responsible for the latter and not for the former. In the sense in which God is responsible for moral evil he is responsible for physical evil, and surely in no other sense.

There are pressing reasons for rejecting the idea that salvation comes by pain. We have seen that the average Jew had learned to think, before Jesus came, that God could do no wrong. Sadly enough, the definiteness with which he believed God to be always right depended upon his ability to approve of the cruel judgments which his sacred books attributed to God. (This is seen in the varying outlooks of the authors of the latest books of the Old Testament and the Apocryphal and Apocalyptic literature.) Now here we see the causal connection between attributing to God the authorship of man's afflictions and supposing that cruelty is at times a virtue. Why should we return good for evil if God by direct intention returns evil for evil? Why should we deal out to men only generosity and gentleness if God wields the rod even in training his most obedient children? The theologian is apt to fancy that it is possible to say that such a line of conduct is right for God but not for us; but it is mere

matter of history that the religious man can never practically say, "Vengeance is for God but not for me." Jesus knew what was in man far better when he urged a life of perfect gentleness and unending generosity, by the argument that it was God's perfection to bless the evil as well as the good, and by the example of his own miracles, which exemplified the doctrine. The effort to copy God's perfection is of the essence of religion; this desire to copy God is therefore quite irresistible to the religious man. When he believes that God wields the rod, he himself also wields it, — in religious controversy, in civic and national relations; and in so doing he fights with the weapons of the enemy, and becomes a futile agent, like a mad soldier striking wildly, now at the enemy, now at his own leader.

As men believe God to be, so they are. As long as the Hebrew believed in a national God his charity had national limits. It was not until the thinkers of the Roman hierarchy had arrived at the idea that salvation could be had beyond their own communion that their finer charity went out to men of other religions. As a matter of everyday fact, no good man who dwells upon "God's use of the rod," and kindred forms of religious phraseology, carries forgiveness to his enemies or opponents very far. Long before the "seventy times seven" is reached he lends himself as an instrument to what he supposes to be the divine wrath. The radical cause of this is indicated by the fact that when the enmity is not personal his anger is more unchecked; forgiveness,

even in the first place, is not essayed because the anger is supposed to be on behalf of God; an attitude virtually insolent is at once almost unconsciously assumed toward those thought to be living in error. That many humble souls of finest fibre rise above this coarseness of vision is due to that continual florescence of a divine principle which we recognise in the words, "His heart is better than his creed;" but that the average Christian indulges himself in rancour and ill-temper under cover of what he believes to be the punitive disposition of Providence is attested by the religious polemics of Christendom.

If we turn to consider the development according to experience of human theories of government, we cannot but perceive that a very important change has been going on. Man has long and universally tried to abolish crime by the most severe penalties; and it is only after ages of legal experiment that he has been convinced that what appears to him the proper result of legal experiment is not its result. Experience shows that the only real deterrent is a higher moral standard; and the sort of fear that terrorism produces is certainly not moral fear. When the psalmist said to God, "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared," he expressed a very deep psychological law. If, then, we see that man in his attempts to govern his fellow-man has made a universal mistake, which was indeed hardly suspected till yesterday,[1] we shall be prepared to admit that his

[1] See the reflection of popular opinion in the speech of King Edward VII. in opening the new Central Criminal Court, Lon-

fallacious notions of human discipline may have given him a fallacious notion of the divine methods; in which case we must alter our conception of the divine plan of government heretofore supposed to be exhibited in such cases as the death of Ananias and Sapphira, St. Paul's thorn in the flesh, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the innumerable misfortunes and diseases which for two thousand years Christians have attributed to the will of God.

There is now a large consensus of moral opinion in favour of the view that legal penalties are justified only in so far as they aim at the benefit of the criminal, and that only by reforming the criminal can society be adequately protected. This stage in civic development corresponds to the religious stage at which the idea of expiating guilt by physical suffering is perceived to be fallacious. The next belief of statesmen and theologians appears to be that the infliction of penalties by way of discipline is desirable. And yet the reflective are aware that this is no logical resting-place, that just in so far as penalties are merely distressful to the criminal they fail to infect him with that love for mankind which is the only root of good behaviour. It is not pain that lifts him, but other elements in punishment. We dimly feel, even with regard to the most degraded

don: "The barbarous penal code which was deemed necessary a hundred years ago has gradually been replaced, in the progress toward a higher civilisation, by laws breathing a more humane spirit and aiming at a nobler purpose. . . . I look with confidence to those who will administer justice in this building to have continued regard to the hope of reform in the criminal."

criminal, that just as brutal punishments would brutalise him further, so there is no infliction that tends to his advancement; that as love is the only force that inexorably compels to the highest ethical achievement, so love is the only force that can illuminate the lowest ethical depths. We perceive, even in the matter of parental discipline, that to talk of inflicting distress as a form of love is in reality a confusion of thought, because punitive discipline at best is the use of an inferior instrument, implying a lack of resource in the parent or state that wields it. It is not a form of love, but a form of expediency; it is not the expression of power, but the expression of impotence. The most that can truly be said for force used either in punishment or war is that we find it necessary. Because we, even while experiencing sentiments of affection, are still sometimes harassed by our limitations into the use of an inferior method, are we therefore justified in continuing to attribute to God what we know to be an inferior method? If the change that has come over the civilised mind in the treatment of criminals and children is a real reformation and advance, it must be reflected in our ideas of God's treatment of us, unless theology is to fall behind, only to find its reformation by a long battle of doubtful issue with sects which will vindicate God's character in ways more or less partial and extreme.

Therefore, since moral progress seems to be along the line of dissociating the thought of suffering from the thought of true purgation, and

so from the thought of God's will, the fact that many of us are so constituted as naturally to think suffering salutary to the moral nature is no conclusive argument for it, because historically we have seen that many convictions have held the race until experience disproved them in most unexpected ways.

There are two great powers that rule us, pain and joy, and the greater of these is joy. But humanity in one stage of its progress deeply believes that pain is the greater. This belief has by the storm and stress of the past been woven into those tendencies of thought that we call instinctive. We try to rule ourselves by pain; we try to rule others by pain; the Church has chiefly tried to guide men by insisting on the power of pain. We go back to the records of the gospel, and find that the Christ preached joy, put forward joy, as the chief factor in the redemption of the world. We cannot at once analyse what this means, because we have believed God to be the volitional source of our pain. The supreme moral reason for rejecting this old belief is that it has robbed the gospel of the joy with which Jesus invested it. Religion is not now the source of much joy. What Christian man is there amongst us who does not rejoice more in a medical consulting-room when told that he can be cured of his disease, or in his lawyer's office when told that he is heir to thousands, or in the presence of the woman he loves when his hand is accepted in marriage, than when he understands that wisdom to know and take the right course, to his

worldly detriment, will be given him in a difficulty? Indeed, how many are there among us who would not rather hear of any success of his children in the competition of life, of any rise in the stocks in which he has invested, of any local victory of his political party, than hear that a heathen province has put on Christ? It may be true that thousands who feel quite naturally and simply that the chief joys of life lie in matters unconnected with the Christian hope would still rather relinquish all else than that hope. "All that a man has will he give for his life;" even, and chiefly, when that life is one long grumble; and a Christian man may esteem the faithfulness of Christ the first necessity of life without having any faith that is better than a grumble. Joy, with its dynamic force, has gone out of our religion, whose total force is thereby greatly diminished. We cannot even conceive of the extent of our lack, because what God would give to a fuller faith is beyond human conception.

The Church would be transfigured if she could, by a corporate faith, stand upon the mount of God, and see him working here and now only for the delight and joy of all his creatures. With new dignity, which would invest her with raiment white and glistering, she would then with authority teach that man must love God with all his powers and his neighbour as himself, and make no compromise with the lower life of self or party interest. It is open to every man to accept Adam's curse, to sweat for mere bread, to set before himself material pleasures as an end: it is within his power, by

giving his chief effort to it, to create material gains, to make bread even out of stones; again, it is open to every man to live for personal ambition, to live for the sake of possessing the kingdoms of this world, however small or large his world may be — a life so given is the worship of the prince of the world. Or it is open to every man to attempt an ascetic religion in defiance of the law that body conditions soul, to attempt to transcend the physical conditions of spiritual life under which God has placed him; by so doing he will attain to some eminence, some temple minaret, and fall therefrom.

There will always be some extreme hour for the true Christian when he will passionately pray that the renunciation of self-interest so terrible to him, and necessarily so painful to God, may in some way be avoided without dishonour. No man in the midst of the world can ever be assured that, in the complex working of human hearts, it may not be open to God to give a happy issue out of menacing afflictions; yet — this is what all the prophets have spoken — every true seer in the long search of the race for God has said clearly that when God does not make a way, man must make none by compromise with the spirit of self-interest, by withdrawing from the warfare. If an earthly king, being evil, desires for every soldier under his banners a painless and honourable path to the joy of victory, how much more God! Yet as the most tender human heart will desire for its dearest, peace only with honour, victory at whatever cost, so must God.

It will be said that the difference is recondite; that if exhaustion and wounds and death are God's will for the Christian in the same sense as they are the will of a king for his soldiers; as long as there must be in the crisis the clash between God's desire and his servant's — as to time and method if not as to end — the distinction between God's infliction of suffering and his preference of suffering to moral defeat matters nothing.

Just so the ancient Israelite, as we see from his literature, regarded as recondite the question whether God was the author of all thought, will, and spiritual activity — of fury as of love, of guile as of truth — or only the author of good. Yet the recognition of the difference marked the parting of the ways for progress or decadence; for man's definition of God's character is his faith. We see that just in so far as any ancient race found God to be antagonistic to moral evil they rose above all adversity, and reigned by giving laws to their conquerors and ethical ideals to the future.

It is, therefore, not difficult to believe that, if we accept the teaching of Christ that God seeks to save all men from suffering as from sin, we shall rise again in the scale. The war against all suffering will become as sacred as the war against sin. While in the whole earth any man suffers wrong from his fellows, or languishes for lack of scientific light and human love and Christ's salvation, the idea of planning life to attain personal fortune or honour or excellence will be felt incompatible with the Christian profession.

CHAPTER IV

FATALISM AND ASCETICISM

THE following considerations will go to show that the fatalistic belief that all suffering is God's will is not only a relic of a past and lower stage of thought, which indeed was brought to greatest perfection in the fatalism of the Hindoo and the Mahommedan, but that while we hold it we cannot have the best inspiration that Christianity can give; further, that the desire to suffer is not necessary to resignation, nor is asceticism necessary to the discipline of effort.

The following quotations from modern writers give what we all recognise as the common notions of Christendom concerning God's dealing with men.

"All the manifold trials with which God visits us are with a view to this perfect purification of the soul. Such trials are needful — for in no other way can we cast aside self; but they are hard to bear — unbearable, indeed, unless we give ourselves up passively to God, who will sustain us. Such trials are more profitable to God's glory and the soul's salvation than the longest life of good works and religious exercises." [1]

[1] From *The Hidden Life of the Soul*, adapted from the French of Jean Nicolas Grou.

"Let the afflictions I meet with be in some measure serviceable toward the appeasing of thy wrath." [1]

"I know, O my God, Thou sendest this sickness on me for my good, even to humble and reform me; O grant it may work that saving effect in me." [2]

"When thou findest thyself visited with sickness . . . let thy first care be, to find out what it is that provokes him to smite thee." [3]

"Whatever your sickness is, know you certainly that it is God's visitation." [4]

This teaching represents the forces of God as warring among themselves. Any young man setting forth on a career of sport or athletics or on some warlike expedition or scientific quest, has a mind cheerfully attuned to the inevitable hardships of his course. If his aim be scientific truth he does not think of truth as making his way arduous, or as being any the truer when attained because of the pains of attainment; nor does a man think of his wounds in warfare as inflicted by the king he serves. Considering the difficulties only as obstacles to be overcome, his attention is not diverted or his force diminished by them. Obstacles, as obstacles, are for the purpose in hand purely evil; and to regard them thus is necessary to the condition of mind typified by the single eye, and necessary to the attainment of

[1] Bishop Wilson, *Sacra Privata*, p. 64.
[2] Bishop Ken, *Manual* (for Winchester boys), p. 120.
[3] *Whole Duty of Man* (17th century), p. 447.
[4] Exhortation to the Sick, *Book of Common Prayer*.

success, earthly or heavenly. Consider how the force of a young warrior would be diminished in the service of a king if he regarded all the trials and misfortunes of his march and warfare as of his king's planning or infliction. Consider how doubtful a man would be of the advantage of reaching scientific truth if he could personify knowledge, and conceive her as guarding all approach to her glorious precincts with a rod. To most men an underlying inconsistency in religious thought is the great deterrent, although they may be unaware of the cause of repulsion. The enthusiast easily leaps over it; the criminal is sunk below any perception of it; but for the mass of men, although the sense of inconsistency is usually quite inarticulate, its baneful effect is none the less there. It is when the deep underlying uneasiness finds words of protest that men begin to struggle out from under the burden, and their activities are set free even though their minds are not able to cope adequately with the problem — as, for instance, in the notable case of "Christian Science." [1]

So much emphasis has been laid on suffering as a chief part of the "good news" of God as set forth by "orthodoxy," that the message has little attraction for the happy. Within the very limited power of expression given to any human artist he has the choice of two ways by which to make light in his picture — by giving greater radiance to the

[1] The writer has no first-hand acquaintance with "Christian Science," and has seen only portions of its literature. See Appendix B.

lighter parts, or by intensifying the shadow. If the shadows are made dark enough, a comparatively muddy and dingy colour can, by contrast with them, be made to appear high light. This is very much the way in which Christendom, in many times and places, has endeavoured to set forth the attractions of the gospel. What has been preached has not been a doctrine which the plain man would recognise in his everyday life as the "good news" of God; the effort to convert him to the belief that it is "good news" has too often taken the form of blackening the evil fate from which it offers an escape. God's providence, the judgment, and the hereafter, have been painted with a brush dipped in a darkness which made itself felt. Against this tendency there has always been the quiet influence of our Lord's words, "If ye then, being evil, know how ye would deal with your children, how much better a father must God be to you than you are to them." This leaven of the kingdom has always worked, giving happier views of God's providence in this world and the next. A large response to these happier views in the heart of the common man to-day, vague and incoherent enough in itself, has undoubtedly sufficed to turn him from Christianity as it is commonly taught.

Does the fault lie with the men who thus turn from the Church? The depth of a man's character and his mental grasp may be measured by the strength of his conviction that he is evil, but not by the belief that God will administer grief to him. The first conviction is based on the failure

that attends his efforts to be good. What spoils his success in being good he calls evil. The loftier his ideal of good, the more earnest his desire to attain it, the more clearly he sees that evil is present with him; the remembrance of it in his past is grievous; its present tyranny seems intolerable. This is a rational attitude toward a fact of which he has some knowledge. On the other hand, it is only by faith that he can see God; his belief concerning God's attitude toward the evil in human nature must be only an inference based on his faith about God; and to believe in God's fatherhood and attribute to him actions toward man in this life which we should call cruel in a father does not appear to argue depth of feeling or clearness of thought. Man's only hope of happiness in the next life rests upon God's character; if God's will for him in this life is direful, hope is inconsistent.

If the gospel of Christ does not offer to the common, happy man in the common, happy street something that arouses his desire as soon as his attention is fixed upon it, it cannot rightly be called "the good news of God." Evil thoughts may quickly dissipate the impression; the cares either of poverty or riches may choke it; his own lack of persistence in desiring anything may wither this desire; yet if it be good news indeed it must attract him naturally and simply, without any dogmatist at his elbow to change the aspect of his past and future life, of earth and hell and heaven, before he recognises it as good. It is the goodness of the news that must itself work the required

change in him. He who, having heard of something he wants more than anything he has, relinquishes his evil thoughts, his worldly ideas, or overcomes his own shallowness, sufficiently to make it his own, must make many discoveries as to the inner nature of sin and self. The good fruit, indeed, which is the result of his reception of the news can only be borne at the expense of his sins, by choking them at the root, a process which is accompanied by a new knowledge of sin and righteousness and judgment.

But at the first hearing the heart of the common man, however indifferent to all things classed as "religious," will answer to the delight of "good news"; and the reason that he is, and has been, so largely left without the gospel of Christ is that what appears bright against the violent shadows of the theologian is not bright in contrast to the common sunshine of daily life. But even the theologians begin to mistrust the shadows; the common man frankly disowns them. That exaltation of suffering as the way of life which was increasingly emphasised in the interpretation given to Christianity by the world of the first Christian centuries — an emphasis which culminated in the mediæval Church and has since decreased—will win the world less and less as the conditions of life improve by the very practice of Christianity. The Pauline doctrine of chastisement emphasised in the cloister, and in every puritan revival, to the exclusion of natural joy, has laid upon the mass of men a burden too heavy to be borne, — the service of a God who wars against his own armies. God

is represented as the agent in every untoward accident, disabling and dismembering those who seek to do him the best service. What can be expected of men but half-hearted service to such a king? Such actions on the part of God required explanation, and all the sophistries of which theology is capable have been required to explain that God was indeed doing better for them in this way than if his kingdom did not appear to be divided against itself.

This explanation can only satisfy three classes; first, those who, having hold of God's hand by the direct simplicity and purity of their character, receive direct from him a higher truth, so wordless that it does not conflict with the letter of any doctrine or concern itself with the letter of any; secondly, those who are prepared to set aside the whole physical aspect of life, and live in an imaginative world that they think to be purely spiritual; or thirdly, the large class of mind whose mental (not physical) indolence and pious sentiment finds its easiest outlet in fatalism.

The reason why fatalism is often credited with a high character is because people attribute to it the courage and patience and resolute activities of the fatalist. That these are often dauntless is due rather to the fact that fatalism numbs all reasonable doubt, lifts religion into an unpractical sphere, and sets man's activities free from the embarrassment of scruple, as we see them for the most part free in healthy childhood or unreflecting youth. What reflection the fatalist does exercise is restful rather than a drain upon his other activities of thought

and body. He is naturally more successful in his enterprise, or more patient under failure, than any man who is trying to reconcile an active reason with the inconsistencies of a religion which he believes ought to be the motive and guide of every activity.

Nor is it necessary to believe that all suffering is of God's direct intention in order to exalt the great virtue of resignation. A man's fidelity to God must be measured by his resignation to the divine will in all things which conflict with his own desire while they belong to God's scheme for the building up of free virtue, just as he resigns himself to the pains, privations, and fatigues of a hard enterprise which he must pursue; but a man's fidelity to God is not measured by resignation to evil that conflicts both with his own desire and also with God's will. If, for example, all the sick folk mentioned in the Gospels had resigned themselves to their condition, had not clamoured for the attention of Jesus, impeding his progress and interrupting his teaching, Christians believe that God's work would have been checked, the kingdom retarded, not advanced. If, on the other hand, every Christian throughout the ages, claiming the gifts God offers to faith, had resigned himself to that degree of wordly failure which uncompromising obedience to the ideal of Christ must involve, the salt of the earth would not, so far, have lost its saltness. "The devil" is probably a fatalist; he certainly will advance his kingdom furthest by persuading the saints to acquiesce in what is not God's will, thus making them feel incapable of doing what is.

The man who can regard God as living apart in the region of necessity or fate; the man who can regard this earth life as a factor which can be set aside as almost negligible in his estimate of existence; the man who sees God face to face, and needs no reasonable account of the divine love — these may thrive upon any doctrine of divine providence. But they are few among the masses whom Jesus came to save; and from under this horrid incubus — the idea of a God who is for ever afflicting those he loves best — we see the modern spirit struggling out in several directions. There is the great protest of pure materialism, "Better no God than one who is worse than an earthly father"; and this sets free natural activities which perhaps are upborne by the divine mind more truly than are the austerities of the enthusiast. There is the great protest of agnosticism, "Better an unknown God than one inconsistent with reason." And this again sets free in the best men activities of speculation and worship which are, perhaps, emboldened by the vital force from the divine heart as any theology coarsened by the world's applause can never be. And there is the recent doctrine of "Christian Science," a mad philosophy but apparently a true worship, honouring certain abstractions from the Christian idea, which are false only because they are abstractions, and have been abstracted from the concrete Christian faith because a large part of the Church had previously contented herself with other abstractions more false and vain.

Further, to maintain that suffering has been

exalted in religious thought to a false honour is not to deny that pain, disappointment, and contradiction are the only field in which we know effort, and that the discipline of effort is salutary in the moral as in the physical life. Every young animal, in order to satisfy its hunger and thirst, its curiosity and inborn activity, will clamber painfully over the most difficult obstacles to attain something it has in view; its falls, its quarrels with its fellows, the disappointment of not reaching what has attracted it, or finding it when reached, less desirable than appeared — these are the evil sufficient for the day which makes it more sturdy and more wise on the morrow. The child that is not seeking to do something a little beyond its strength and wit, falling and failing, disputing with men and circumstances its right to success, is not — at six months or at twenty years — a growing child; and furthermore, is not a happy child. And when, after threescore years and ten, he begins to cease all effort and turn aside from all discussion, we sadly say, "He is ageing fast;" and life is practically over as soon as the effort to reach what is beyond reach, with the pains and disappointments and contradictions necessary to effort and uncertainty, have ceased. What we need most carefully to mark is that with the cessation of effort comes the cessation of joy. This knowledge, that the discipline of effort is the law of life as we know it, affects our idea of all delight as much as our idea of pain, our idea of heaven as well as of hell. We look forward in another life, not to rest but to less friction, not to

any joy in the feeling that there are no new worlds to conquer, but to the joy of eternal conquest; and the ideas of power without expenditure, of movement without friction, are not now possible to our reasoning powers, so that we regard the discipline which attends effort as quite as much necessary for delight as for development.

Many place a high value upon what they think to be asceticism without taking pains to distinguish it from other principles of action. To choose any course which involves hardship and self-denial for the sake of accomplishing some end which is counted worth the cost, is not asceticism unless, when the end is the development of a man's own character, the hardship chosen be some form of discipline which will keep the body in subjection.

For example, he who, for the sake of supporting some relative, or in order to obtain a position, or to be able to marry, chooses a meagre and toilsome life, is not an ascetic. Neither is he an ascetic if he choose the same life in the missionary spirit, for the sake of bestowing spiritual wealth upon others. A man who sells all he has to buy a pearl or a field, or to further the interests of a kingdom that claims his loyalty, is not an ascetic.

If, however, the man who sold all he had for the sake of gaining something he desired more, should think that the poverty or inconvenience that he suffered was to be courted for the sake of enhancing his own fitness to receive the treasure, or because such suffering was pleasing to some invisible power, the element of asceticism would enter into what he did. A man who gives up

eating meat one day in the week because he thinks, or those he chooses to obey think, that his body will thereby become stronger, and on the whole, more healthy and therefore more useful to himself and to God, is not an ascetic. But if he fast on Friday, believing that physical inconvenience is the best method of bringing his body into subjection to his will and so making it more useful to himself and to God, he is an ascetic. Asceticism lies in the belief that there is some moral advantage to be gained by the mere endurance of suffering, and in the habit of courting for that end suffering which has no other end. Two men may act in precisely the same way, one an ascetic, the other a free man of the kingdom of Christ. The difference does not depend on whether a man consider a moral advantage worth purchasing at the cost of a physical disadvantage; but on whether he consider the courting of physical disadvantage the true way to gain moral advantage.

There can surely be no doubt that Jesus taught that his followers must choose all the self-denial and loss that is involved for any man in making the kingdom of heaven, its interests and its benefits, the first object of desire and effort. The end for each man is union with God; the means to that end is union with man. The kingdom was the aggregate of those who lived by this means to this end. But the joy of the end and the joy of the means was to swallow up all incidental loss and pain. We are all familiar with that description of the life of Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising

the shame." The spirit in these words is very different from the spirit that courts pain and shame for the private benefit of character. In the parables of the kingdom, in the precepts concerning life in the kingdom, what is given or done to obtain the end in view is incidental, and the mind, fixed on the joy of its motive, is filled with images of gain and gladness rather than with images of privation and pain. The glow of enterprise, the flush of effort, the buoyancy of hope, and the strenuous faith which grasps the substance hoped for and tastes the delight of what is as yet unseen, all combine to build up the moral character of the child of the kingdom. It is true that he also gains all the moral benefit that loss can give; but, instead of seeking loss, he spurns with the sole of his foot each hardship by which he rises. We can see him on his mountain path, footsore, climbing up from crag to crag; the sharp rocks are his natural sorrows; the sweet air he breathes, the sweet fruits on which he feeds, are his simple earthly goods, and are as essential to his progress as the rough road on which he treads. But his mind, in harmony with his heavenly calling, dwells on the beauty and comforts of the pathway because they are the direct gifts of his God whose love lures him on. He has no need to seek to wound his feet; inspired by God, he takes the quickest path, however rough, and hardly understands that the blood upon the pathway is his own.

CHAPTER V

PROPHETS AND APOSTLES

We may, by analogy, briefly outline the change that has come over the minds of Christian thinkers with regard to the authority of the lawgivers and prophets of Israel, and also of the apostles.

It is not uncommon for young children to be trained, by precept of mother and nurse, to regard their father as an infallible authority and example. Sturdy intelligent boys, pushing beyond the nursery, are bound to perceive that their ideals of justice, mercy, and common sense do not always tally with the parental word and character. Here the father said something that was not quite accurate, there he showed temper; and such instances, even if exceptional, are remembered when the father's discipline is not to their taste. The first workings of such observations do not, in fact cannot, overthrow the dogma of the father's infallibility so early, and perhaps wisely, implanted. The result is rebellion against the infallible standard. Anarchy reigns in the heart of the son, and in many a case carries him beyond the influence of the domestic circle into a world where, without guiding principle,

he too often loses his way. But, perhaps in many more cases, what happens is this: growing older, going to school and returning, the boy forgets the nursery dogma; his father appears to him as a man among men; then how gladly does he recognise all that is good in his father's heart, all that is wise in his judgment, all that is true in his principles! We cannot stay here to inquire how a boy obtains a standard by which to judge what in his father is worthy of imitation and what is not; it remains a fact that he does judge. A boy may make mistakes, but the moral sense within and the common sense of the community without, make such judgment inevitable to a growing intellect. The father now has a deeper influence over the growing man than he could ever have had if seen in a false light, even had the son rendered unreasoning obedience all his life, because the father's influence now extends beyond action and mechanical thought to the springs of spontaneous thought and action.

Such is, in some sort, now the influence which the lives and opinions of prophets and apostles have over the thinking Christian, who says that the Old Testament is not so much an inspired record as a wonderfully candid record of the lives, the opinions, and the worship, of men inspired by that hunger and thirst for righteousness which cannot fail of its desire, and with that purity of heart which sees God. Their age was not infallible, and they were men of their age. The same must be said of the writers of the Gospels and Epistles; the test of the quality of their inspiration is the

higher life and higher faith which they actually did implant in the world.

Why, then, do we believe in the infallibility of Jesus? The assurance of that central Christian faith rests upon the intuitive knowledge which his servants daily have of him, and which is incommunicable by argument. It is like the oil in the lamp of the wedding guest, which cannot be transferred to the lamp which another carries, and can only be known to others by its light. We cannot too clearly bear in mind that all on the side of reason that is essential to the intuitive faith of any Christian is that his own reason should not contradict it; so that all strife of tongues concerning Christian dogmas are, beyond that, irrelevant to the central Christian belief. At the same time this intuitive knowledge can be buttressed by any argument that seems reasonable to its possessor. If the possessor be a well-informed and thinking person, what appears reasonable to him will have a certain force with other thinking persons; and with regard to the different position which Jesus occupies in religious history compared with prophets and apostles, we would note two lines of thought and research which commend themselves.

The first is that, taking the world over and the length of ages, all that we find of new life, new thought, and new impulse in the early Christian Church must be set down to a new cause, and in so far as it corresponds with the life of Jesus told in the Gospels it is only reasonable to regard his inspiration as the cause. It is almost superfluous now to remark that the religious thought and

activities of the Gentile nations were, in the ancient world, and are now, on a much higher plane than Christian apologists used to suppose; but granting all of good that can be ascribed to them and to the pious Jews of the Christian era, there is in the early Church, and in its effect upon its environment, evidence of an impulse of joyful love and a new estimate of God which can be most reasonably accounted for by assuming the substantial truth of the Gospel record. Joy was the most novel feature of the new faith; no adequate cause but the truth of the Gospel story can be assumed for it.

The second consideration which makes it the more reasonable to regard Jesus as holding some unique place among mystics, among lawgivers, among poets, and among practical reformers, as having an inspiration which raised him above his fellow-men in all these capacities, is that disciples, obviously incapable of understanding all that they transmitted, of grasping more than a small part of the force of what they transmitted, did none the less transmit it in a form such that every progressive generation has been able to assimilate from that form more and more of what is godlike. To-day we find in the life of Jesus truths which prove to be the solution of national and social problems, and of the problems of every individual heart. To say this is not to assert that the theology of the Christian Church at any one period solves these problems, still less that the conception of Christianity in the minds of those who reject it is a conception that helps to such solution. Christian

theology in every age has stood to the message of Jesus as the partial conceptions of the first disciples stood to it. The great Christian miracle is that through this shifting but perennial misconception a Christ is still seen, is, as we believe the progress of the world proves, increasingly understood, and can be grasped by faith which in operation accomplishes the highest human ends. This is a strong argument for a belief that does not rest on argument.

But to return to the question of the relative positions of Jesus and other teachers whose words are recorded in Scripture. It seems, indeed, extraordinary that the Church for many centuries has taught that Jesus was "very God of very God," and yet held that his life and words did not hold the mirror to the character of God the Father more clearly than did the lives and words of his own followers. We have now a theoretical knowledge of this mistake; we need to have the application of this knowledge enforced. We are still slothfully holding hard to many conclusions arrived at by arguments of which the equal inspiration of all Scripture was the major premiss. The premiss is lost; we have not revised our conclusions.

The inspiration of a nation is seen in its life, in its gallant struggle to know God and to do righteousness: the inspiration of an apostle is shown in the calibre of his missionary life, and in the life he implants in others. If we were to refuse to be content until the nation we represent sought God as impetuously as did Israel under

divine inspiration, until the inspiration of the Apostles was imparted to us as individuals and our lives bore the same abundant fruits, we should no longer be in danger of confusing the inspiration of the Master with that of some of his disciples; and should avoid the confusions of thought which have arisen out of the belief that the doctrine of Jesus must be modified and corrected until it correspond with the interpretation of his forerunners and followers.

If we examine the way in which Jesus treated the prestige of the prophets and lawgivers of the Old Testament we shall see that we have his own authority for allowing each age to test the inspiration of sacred books by the highest developments of truth which the corporate mind may then grasp. There is plain evidence in history that every law or moral obligation that the race has seriously adopted as a way of salvation must be worked out with fear till its every requirement — each jot and tittle — has been exhaustively tested, and found either useful or useless in the attainment of the highest ends. Yet when Jesus says that the law shall not fail, that he himself came to fulfil the law, and that the law is more enduring than heaven and earth, it is clearly not the laws, or even the moral obligations, of Semitic ceremonial and taboo, and the crude ethics attached to them, to which he refers; it is clearly the rightness of justice and mercy, and their eternal synthesis of love, of which he is speaking.

In speaking thus of the eternal right, what did he mean to teach about all that mass of legal

enactments embedded in the canonical books of the Old Testament, which the Jews from whom he sprang, to whom he spoke, regarded as "the law"? If we read those long passages in the Pentateuch which deal with the details of the clean and unclean — regulations which were not of the Jahveh religion, but had come down from Semitic fathers of the dim animistic past, like circumcision, which our Lord himself says was not of Moses — we must see that Jesus could have had no thought of setting the seal of his authority upon all this. It seems clear that he would teach that a great part of the books of the Old Testament were negligible, so certain to pass away in the hearts and minds of those who entered into life through his life that no argument concerning them was necessary.

If the Christian Church, by upholding the authority of all the canonical scriptures, has determinedly put a new patch on an old garment, the ever-increasing rent cannot be charged to Jesus. He who would not in his lifetime pay heed to ceremonial rules which clashed with any need of human life, who even neglected useless ceremony when no need required the neglect, could not have regarded pages devoted to such regulations as having ever been of divine inspiration. How gentle was his protestantism! He admits that the new doctrine must be a store for the future, like new wine hung up in new wine-skins to gain value by time; his gentle excuse for the way they would for many generations cling to the old doctrine is, "No man having drunk old wine

desireth new, for he saith, The old is good." "This ought ye to have done" as long as it seems to you to have divine authority, but not to have omitted the weightier matters of justice and mercy. He was confident that he who follows the guiding light of these virtues will soon become so absorbed in the aspect of the divine character which they unfold that he will cease to assume divine sanction for anything trivial or banal.

Thus we see that the explanation of our Lord's attitude toward the written law was that he did not consider it worth while to publish destructive criticism of what was necessarily transitory. His own definite attitude toward their doctrine of the infallibility of their past teachers flashes out after a discussion with the theologians at Jerusalem, when they had uttered again their oft-repeated taunt, claiming the authority of their holy records against his work — "Abraham is our father." "We know that God spake unto Moses, as for this fellow we know not from whence he is." His reply is the parable of the false shepherds and the true. "All that ever came before me were thieves and robbers." There stand his words, his own explanation of the parable, as valid as any of the dear familiar words that follow. "I am the good shepherd." "I am the door." I alone! It is all poetry, the expression not only of a wounded heart but of a glowing imagination, and we are forced to admit that if the passage teaches that in comparison with all his forerunners, the law and the prophets, Jesus is the one Saviour of his people, it also teaches that in comparison

with his authority the authority of the law and the prophets was as nothing.

Again, we have set up the authority of his own disciples to modify and correct our understanding of the teaching of Jesus, in spite of our knowledge that the greater a man is the more difficult it is for him to win a full understanding from other men. Let us begin with the case of a man who is somewhat superior to his fellows in power of thought and expression, and also in moral character. He knows that his differing aspects are understood by differing and ever-widening circles of people. In one aspect he will be best known by his brothers and sisters, his wife and children. Whatever is personally attractive in him will be dearest to the hearts of those nearest to him; these are they who would in the first place suffer most for his sake. But such a man is perfectly conscious that members of this inner circle rarely understand his thoughts: whatever expression he gives to them goes out into the world, and finds its best soil here and there in the minds of comparative strangers, who are better able to interpret his art or doctrine, or whatever it be, than are his nearest relatives. If, however, he is, as we say, "before his age," great enough to have grasped something which his generation has failed to apprehend, then, the more certain he is of the truth of his vision, the more he is assured that it must wait to win a full understanding from future generations. Kepler's great foreword, that he could well be content to wait for readers since God had waited so long

for a discoverer, finds an echo in the heart of every one who has in any way studied the phenomena of human genius.

From all this it is evident that the more we exalt the character and the message of Jesus Christ, the more we must realise that what is true of every man of petty distinction must have been true in much greater measure of him. To the inner circle of his disciples was revealed the highest degree of lovableness in human personality that the earth had seen. They loved, and that was their inspiration — so great an inspiration that the whole busy world has been forced to gaze at their master through the description wrought by their personal affection. But these men were not so well fitted to grasp the message of Jesus in its depth of thought, its international application, and its universal hope, as were some of those who believed because of their word. Of this first outer circle St. Paul is the magnificent example; and that very many others seized on the thoughts of Jesus and were seized by them, is shown by the rapid spread of the Christian doctrine in the best forms in which that age could assimilate it. Their inspiration was devotion to the mind of Christ to the utmost extent of their power to understand and teach it.

If, however, we are to believe that the interpretation of the message of Jesus given by St. Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews and other inspired writers, was an infallible interpretation for all time, we must believe, either that they were as great in spiritual

and intellectual insight as Jesus, or were the subjects of mechanical inspiration. Quite frankly, very few of us believe either of these alternatives. It is more reasonable to suppose that, bringing as they did the limitations of their age to the interpretation of the great doctrines of the Father in heaven and the kingdom of heaven, they veiled them with the clouds of God's wrath that, for their eyes, hung in the empyrean. The greatest marvel of the inspiration of the pen is in the Gospel narratives, which, notwithstanding the sombre beliefs of the writers, show us Jesus looking up into a cloudless heaven.

All the parables of the seeds show how deeply Jesus felt that what he had to impart could not be imparted in the form in which it must develop. Everything shows that he perceived that in teaching his most devoted followers he was speaking as an adult to little children, or rather, that that simile dimly expressed the conditions under which he laboured. It was only transcendent faith in the purpose of God that gave him the conviction that the seed would grow and that quickly. It is worth while observing that the seed to which he likens the kingdom, or the seed of the husbandman to whose action he likens the kingdom, is the seed of an annual crop. There is no plant that in the glory of its bloom is more ethereal, more obviously transient, than the oriental mustard; there is nothing that will so certainly be mown down as corn. There were trees in Palestine that were symbols of what was everlasting, which were as large in proportion

to the size of their seeds as any annual; but they were not the figure chosen, because seed that grew up into men must obviously blossom into the ideas of one generation, which could never be the precise ideas of the next; and yet, through those vistas which he sketched, in which nation shall rise against nation and the devotees of false Christs shall fill the world with their preaching, he saw the seed of the kingdom ever self-sown and producing an ever-increasing harvest.

How swift and splendid was the first crop! St. Paul stands out prominent. So small a seed — perhaps an earthly acquaintance, perhaps a second-hand story — and how great a Christian, lifting whole nations God-ward in the ardour of his heart! Yet St. Paul was a Jew, believing that God had required the slaughter of beasts; a Pharisee of the Pharisees he was, steeped in the idea of an awful, far-off, material God, and a cruel, fantastic, material law by which came condemnation but no forgiveness; every tendency of his thought as a Pharisee was darkness fighting with the light; a son of the later Greeks was he; from them he had learned that the unseen only was real; a citizen of Rome was he, and in his mind the mailed hand was the only stay of justice. These strains were the threads of his thought; every image in his fancy must be embroidered by them. Yet see how splendid was the work of the salvation by joy in him —the faith that levelled mountains of legalism; the love of God that overleaped his highest creed; the glowing heart of friendship to man that he bared to the world in the overflowing haste of his

burning rhetoric! We have done our best to kill the living, loving marvel of a personality that was given for our instruction, by worshipping the letter of his word. This man would have been no help to us as father or brother if he had been a mere instrument of mechanical inspiration; he would have been no man, but another Christ, if he could have comprehended the revelation of the Christ without mixing and tingeing it with the darkness of his age.

What was St. Paul to Jesus? A lost sheep, on whose headstrong track he endured terrible sorrow. What was St. Paul to Jesus? The lost coin which, had he not found it, would have lain more useless than a mere ornament, a coin out of currency, an absolute economic waste. Is this reason for exalting St. Paul's opinions and experiences into a standard to which his Lord's teaching must be conformed? The weight of St. Paul's opinion is perhaps, on the whole, on the side of the belief that suffering is God's chief agent in man's salvation; and an arbitrary exaltation of this, which was only one phase of his thought, has gone far to obliterate the numerous passages in which he glorifies the joy of the gospel. Joy! joy! joy! was his war-cry, although he held hard by the saving power of pain which was the thought of his age. We, holding to the superstition of the past, have ceased to understand his joy.

As with St. Paul, so it is with all that brotherhood of love and power — St. Peter and St. James and the author of the letter to the Hebrews, even

St. John the Divine. They had all a far greater share of the light than had the Baptist, in whom culminated the antagonism between righteousness and joy; but they were all necessarily burdened with some phase of the asceticism that bound him. The bed-rock of their thought was made up, not, as we sometimes suppose, of the highest utterances of the Old Testament prophets and the psalmists, but of these mingled and overwhelmed with the low standards of the Levitical and Apocryphal books and the smaller ideas of a more primitive age — the limitations of a national God and a national charity. Under such limiting conditions they had to interpret the Christ by whose imparted life they became sons of God. They carried the torch of the Light farther into the surrounding darkness; but what they carried was a torch lit at the Light, not the Light itself, and the torch flared and smoked. Its Light was glorious and eternal, but the smoke arose because the very material of the torch was partly made up of error.

In any case it is obvious that whenever the followers of Christ, professing to believe in the stupendous fact of the Incarnation, put the words and actions of their master Christ only on a level with those of Christian teachers, they breed in the intelligent onlooker contempt for their conception of the Divine nature as shown forth in that brief flash of perfect life. If we revise his actions and opinions by the standard of any other man it is clear that we lack either the power to realise any meaning in the doctrine or fidelity to it. It is

needful to believe that the Divine Spirit remained with them — remains with us for ever — to reflect and illuminate and enlarge upon that one exquisite creation of virtue's perfect proportion whose outward form was so soon destroyed; but when we ignore or deny any part of the teaching of that perfect life and ministry, lower its standards, diminish its force, or change its emphasis, because his first followers did so, this is surely an actual rejection of the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ — the most powerful of all rejections if it come to the world with Christian authority.

CHAPTER VI

IRREVERENT ECLECTICISM

In view of what has been said in the preceding chapter let us now consider what light is thrown by the Jewish and Christian Scriptures on the question of God's relation to suffering. It is a remarkable fact that all down the Christian ages, alike in times of ignorance and of light, we have read those Scriptures with intense solemnity and awe and, with that, have not scrupled to exercise an eclecticism in our interpretation, the folly and irreverence of which any child might perceive. As long as we accepted the various witnesses in our Bible as all infallible, we were indeed driven to practically emphasising one and ignoring another in order to get any coherent doctrine as to the nature and effect of pain.

In the later books of the Old Testament, and in the early Christian years, we find men struggling to adjust their experience of good and bad fortune to a progressive belief in God's universal providence. For them we can have only respect. They were faced with conflicting ideas, and with noble candour they wrote as they thought, now one way, now another.

"As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee."[1] These words occur in a sermon (Deut. v.–xi.) which the authors of Deuteronomy put into the mouth of Moses. In the same sermon Israel is told that if he obey the law every earthly pleasure shall be given as a reward. He is also told to destroy utterly every neighbouring nation. "Thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them."[2] If we are not prepared to believe that God incited Israel to spend years in slaughtering the men, women, children, and cattle of adjacent nations; if we are not prepared to believe that had Israel kept the laws given them, perfect prosperity and immunity from all misfortune would have resulted, then we must admit that any quotation from this same sermon carries with it only the authority given to it by our own instinctive sense of truth, and that, with our imperfectly developed power of spiritual insight, we do well to test any favourite quotation by the Gospel story.

The same may be said of every passage in the Old Testament that deals with God's punitive actions toward men. The oft-quoted passage in Proverbs, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither weary of his reproof, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," is preceded by the statement that if we honour God with the first-fruits of our substance we shall be given more corn and wine than we know what to do with,[3] and is followed by the statement that the wisdom

[1] Deut. viii. 5. [2] Deut. vii. 2. [3] Prov. iii. 10.

produced by God's severity will give us length of days, honour, and riches.[1] Both the idea that God saves by suffering and the idea that the good are to be happy in this life have equal countenance in this passage; if we reject its validity as teaching that the deserving will be happy in this world we cannot urge its authority as teaching that suffering is a mark of God's favour. As a matter of fact, the saying that God chastens those he loves was accepted and emphasised by that higher class of Jewish religious thinkers who looked to suffering for salvation, and was by them incorporated into Christianity, just as the more popular idea that earthly prosperity was the reward promised for service was imported into Christianity by the converts from legal Judaism.

There are not many more noble pieces of literature in the world than the Epistle to the Hebrews, very few from which so much of the true spirit of Christianity can be learned; but there are passages in it that we cannot incorporate into our scheme of thought, nor can we, in these days, think ourselves into the author's point of view on many matters. Take, for example, the statement in chap. vi. verses 4 to 6, that if a convert, having understood the Christian doctrine and known its power, should fall away, it is impossible to renew such an one unto repentance. The chapters that have been written to explain away the plain meaning of this passage prove that the common sense of the Church does not accept the author in this matter. Or take the argument

[1] Prov. iii. 16.

concerning the oath God sware to Abraham,[1] or the historical sketch of Melchisedec.[2] Of these we rightly say that unless the future throws further light upon their meaning, they imply trains of thought and imagery which mankind has outgrown. When the same writer assures us that the suffering of Jesus on earth wrought his purification,[3] and quotes the Old Testament to show that God's action to those he loves best is always punitive,[4] his words cannot establish the doctrine for us.

Perplexity of ideas as to the method of God's dealing with men and the origin of misfortunes is also shown in the magnificent Apocalyptic poem of the Revelation. The apostle puts into the mouth of the risen Christ this quotation from the Book of Proverbs. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten."[5] Here Jesus himself is represented as the source of pain. In the same vision he is represented as saying, "The devil is about to cast some of you into prison, where ye may have tribulation ten days";[6] "Antipas, my faithful one, who was killed . . . where Satan dwelleth."[7] In these texts we seem to have the Evil One as the source of human suffering. Again, in the same vision the Lord says, "He that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces."[8] Here we seem to have the spirits of just men made

[1] Hebrews vi. 13.
[2] *Ibid.* vii. 1–17.
[3] *Ibid.* v. 8.
[4] *Ibid.* xii. 5–12.
[5] Rev. iii. 19.
[6] *Ibid.* ii. 10.
[7] *Ibid.* ii. 13.
[8] *Ibid.* ii. 26–27.

perfect as a source of evil to wicked men upon earth. From among many similar passages we may take that salient one where St. Paul states that his thorn in the flesh was the messenger of Satan, and that yet he was taught to regard it as the will of God. This is in harmony with the Book of Job, and the idea underlies much of the best literature of the intervening centuries. An eclecticism which emphasises one of these two sets of ideas and ignores the other, while claiming the authority of Scripture for such proceeding, is self-destructive.

We are forced, then, if we would find any certain voice telling us the relation of God to physical evil, to look for it only in the revelation of Jesus.

CHAPTER VII

DREAMS OF JUSTICE

We are all imbued with the notion, not only that under the rule of a good God justice must exist, but that mankind has arrived at some idea of in what that divine justice must consist. It seems more likely that the human race is still in its childhood, and that it has not grasped such a notion of justice as approximates to divine justice. In this connection it is a very interesting fact that the doctrine of Jesus in some points sets aside the human sense of justice as negligible.

Our modern notion of ideal justice has been expressed as "the distribution of good and evil according to desert."

"When we speak of the world as justly governed by God, we seem to mean that, if we could know the whole of human existence, we should find that happiness is distributed among men according to their deserts. . . . Common sense seems to hold that a man who has done wrong ought to suffer pain in return (even if no benefit result either to him or to others from the pain), and that justice requires this; although the individual

wronged ought not to seek or desire to inflict the pain."[1]

This idea of justice has been applied among religious men in formulating an objection to what has been called the "substitutional" doctrine of the death of Jesus; men will say that God could not be so unjust as to punish one for another's sin, that every man must bear the punishment of his own sin, and so forth.

Theory apart, in the actual world around us retributive justice, as man has conceived it and as expressed in the above quotation, does not appear to have any existence. We meet with rude attempts toward it made by human civilisations for their own protection, but these admittedly do not realise the ideal. The idea, however, of the Supreme Power as dealing to every man a punishment exactly fitted to his misdoing rose with the conception of individual responsibility, and is the idea of justice upon which all penal codes are founded. It was a strong force in Greek thought, was certainly the strongest bulwark of Roman civilisation, and lies perhaps as deep as any assurance in the modern mind. This idea has been an important factor in the education of the race; so also were the communal ideas of justice which preceded it, and which for a long period of transition were confused with it. When a man regarded himself as only part of a tribe, when law-breaking was conceived as producing in him a quality of guilt which was infectious, and which would rapidly spread to the innocent around him, men's idea of

[1] *The Methods of Ethics*, by H. Sidgwick, Book III. Chap. V.

righteous dealing often involved the destruction of a whole family or tribe or nation; even the very cattle they possessed were also exterminated if they came under the ban. This was a sense of right which seems to have existed for more centuries than has the more modern notion. It had in it germs of truth that an extreme individualism is apt to ignore; but it was not a true ideal. It is impossible to think that it dwells as an ideal in the heart of a personal God; yet it is the copy and reflection of the justice which his laws of matter mete out. The child that plays with fire is burnt, but so also, if he have done enough mischief, is the house containing him, and, as far as natural law is concerned, the town in which he lives and all in it.

The ideal of a retributive justice adjusted to personal deserts must pass away, as did the older ideal; because the very essence of it is that a man must bear the punishment of his own sin and not of another's sin, and such justice does not, and can never, exist in life as we know it. A world in which it exists may or may not be possible, but we have not the slightest evidence of its possibility. Each individual in such a world would need to be so separated from all others as to bear to them no relation of love or affection or protection or dependence. In our actual world a man is commonly loved more or less by father and mother, sister and brother, wife and child, friend and fellow-citizen. If he degrades himself by vice or crime, some or all of these suffer more than he; and the more really innocent they are of any inclination to

his failings, the more sensitive they are to the suffering. If, as the Christian believes, God also loves this wrongdoer with a love infinite and tender beyond the sum of all earthly loves, and with a divine innocence to which the thought of wrong is loathsome, God also must suffer — and suffer with divine intensity of passion — for the man's sin.

What justice can we conceive of here? What can requite the sinner's father and mother for the heartbreak his sin has caused them? or his wife, who identifies herself with him, exercising for him the passion of contrition of which he is wholly incapable? or his child for a blasted youth and the taint of moral obliquity which he in his turn may transmit to future generations? or his fellows for the degree in which the average level of virtue has fallen? above all, what can requite God for his pain? Can any suffering on the culprit's part requite them? Certainly not; it will only increase their woe. As the suffering of the culprit is increased by penalty, the suffering of all those innocent ones who love him is increased, and God's suffering is cumulatively increased. The God in whom the Christian believes — immanent in the spirits of men, transcending them in ever-vigilant compassion — suffers in the sorrow of all as well as in their sin; he suffers, therefore, in the sorrow of parent and friend, wife and child, and of the culprit also. How, then, can the endurance of any punishment by the culprit, though richly merited, set things right when every moment of pain that he endures inflicts greater pain upon the innocent? It is, then, the utmost folly to talk of

a man appropriating the punishment of his own sins, for even if we suppose him to be a member of society unloved by any and worthless to all, we must still be aware that his suffering and degradation means suffering or degradation to all who touch his existence at any point, and the greater according to their goodness. Thus it is clear that in any human existence which we can understand, the innocent, both God and man, suffer for the guilty, and any penalty inflicted on guilt must increase their suffering.

This, to our minds, unjust retribution, which involves the innocent suffering with the guilty and suffering more than the guilty, may be regarded in two ways, either of which suggest that it may be a part of some higher justice beyond our sight. It may be regarded as a deterrent to other would-be sinners; it may be right that the sinner, and every one else in his generation to some degree, should suffer for the sin in order that those who come after may be made afraid; but we must allow that this, even as it affects the sinner, is not consonant with the modern notion of justice, which would refuse to punish a man because other men's children will be frail and peccable. Or, secondly, it may be that sin is not an accident of this or that man's will, but the manifestation of a vital power or evil personality other than human, whose every activity is doomed to self-destruction in which minor personalities who admit his working must share to the degree in which they admit it. On this theory pain, according to the law of the kingdom of evil, might

necessarily follow sin, being part of the process, the working of the seeds of death. Taking this view we do not conceive of the penalty as meted out by the direct will of a righteous judge, but merely as an evil and inevitable growth from the germ of sin — sin and pain together being, as it were, a cancer in the individual and the race which, unless cured, must destroy its victim.

Such an explanation of the actual condition of things may be the embodiment of a higher justice, but it is a justice higher than we have conceived or can now conceive. On such a view the penalty, not being inflicted by a judge, could not be remitted as a judge might remit a sentence he himself had passed. Let us attempt a crude analogy. A man might do another serious injury with an explosive, but if the circumstances were such that the criminal could not avoid being shattered to pieces, the injured man could not by the frankest forgiveness remit the penalty. Similarly we may conceive that the forgiveness of the divine judge could not interfere with the action of laws he has ordained. All that he could do would be to lift the culprit out of the sphere in which those laws operated, if there were such other sphere. In human affairs we see what suggests this possibility. Many diseases may be cured by lifting men from foul surroundings to live in cleanliness and purer air. Strong sunshine will kill those germs of disease that make ravages in the dark.

We thus see that the idea of pain being retributive may in two ways, not mutually exclusive, be rendered possibly reasonable; but, in working,

retributive pain never embodies the ideal of individual justice because of the greater measure of innocent suffering which the infliction of penalty always involves. The only way in which such retributive pain can be conceived as realising justice is by supposing that it can be so allotted to the culprit as to raise his moral worth to such extent that he will certainly be, after the experience, the source of an amount of joy to his fellows and to God that will exactly compensate their innocent suffering on his account.

How far does experience suggest that the suffering of penalty has a corresponding, or any, reformatory effect upon the culprit? Reviewing the storm and stress of evolution, the moralist inquires what part pain has played in the age-long development of character, and it is not uncommon to assume that in this aspect the uses of pain have been all beneficial. Against this theory we have to set the fact that pain has undoubtedly produced such qualities as fear, cowardice, cunning, anger, hatred, spite. These qualities are not evoked in an individual or in a race by the joyful exercise of the natural powers of life; therefore, if to the pain and difficulty of existence we owe noble characteristics — strength of will, fortitude, courage, compassion — we also derive our more malignant qualities from the same source; and any argument as to the value of pain which emphasises the virtues it engenders and does not recognise the vices derived from it, is fallacious. Indeed, it would appear that we might go farther, for while, as our knowledge stands at present, we have no reason at

all to suppose that a creature whose ancestors had never suffered privation or been hurt or robbed would know anger, hatred, or envy, we have no proof that the opposite virtues could not have been developed with less racial suffering. For example, a child who has never been threatened or hurt does not, except by heredity, feel fear of its kind; but being possessed of a new plaything, it may feel compassion for the child who has none, although the fact of having no new toy would not of itself necessitate positive suffering in the other. Again, fortitude, strength of will, and courage are cultivated by strenuous pursuits which men rank as pleasures, as well as by misfortune. It is therefore more reasonable to suppose that human and animal virtue might have been developed without what appears to us pain and disorder than to suppose that angry passions could have existed without these irritating causes.

We thus conclude that the penalty of wrong-doing is not, and cannot be, so distributed in this social order as to realise man's ideal of justice; and further, that there is no presumption — quite the contrary — that the corrective influence of penalty so far as borne by the culprit, is such as to give the community by his reformation an advantage that balances the suffering he has cost.

Further, if we are bound by the constitution of our minds to believe that justice exists and to attribute it to God, we must do so frankly, admitting that we have no conception of what divine justice must be.

This is an important point to realise in studying

the gospel of Jesus. To accept that gospel is to believe that ideal justice exists, because without it there could be no forgiveness. Because we cannot comprehend God's justice we are forced to realise that we can in no way comprehend his forgiveness. Forgiveness from God to man, from man to man, Jesus taught was a terrible reality. How terrible to man the obligation to forgive his brother all manner of wrong! how terrible to know that God's forgiveness depends upon this! How terrible to a man the joy of knowing himself forgiven by God! And Jesus represents God's forgiveness as entirely beyond and above human notions of desert; he always represents God as maintaining toward man an attitude of entire forgiveness and bestowing upon man the consciousness of his forgiveness in instant response to every heart-felt appeal to his mercy. Further, he represents God as imposing the same attitude on every faithful soul toward his fellow-men; if a man would continue conscious of God's forgiveness he must maintain toward other men the attitude God maintains toward him, an attitude of perfect forgiveness which will be as frankly expressed the moment the wrongdoer desires its expression.

That such whole-hearted forgiveness should be consistent with God's infliction of penalty on the sinner is only possible under the conviction that the penalty is good for the sinner. We have seen that there is no evidence to uphold this very old explanation of the problem of suffering; we must now observe that Jesus did not give his authority to it. He speaks of penalties and places of punish-

ment as wholly bad, and urges their essential harmfulness as one of the strongest motives to righteousness. He speaks of forgiveness from God to man, and from man to man, as an action of supreme importance, and emphasises the suffering, which is not penal, of those who, being persecuted, must thus forgive. In his imagery the tyrant who kills the body and casts the spirit into hell is not God.

But more, there can be no doubt that Jesus taught that God's forgiveness, when so bestowed as to enter into man's consciousness, did include escape from the penalty of sin; and the manner of escape must be indicated by the conditions inseparable from the bestowal of the gift. The appeal for mercy, however instinctive, however little thought out, involves an estimate of God's character as love; it involves the recognition, though but momentary, that the gift can only proceed from pure love, cannot be merited either by virtue or by tears; and from this — if the consciousness of being forgiven is to be continuous — from this momentary conception of God as love must proceed the same love to men, based, not upon their deserts, but upon that love which in its essence is feeling as our fellow feels, or community of life.

When Jesus spoke of this condition of heart — the reception of God's gift of forgiveness, the outflow and passing on of that gift to the world — he was not speaking of assent to a doctrine, or to a theory of life, but of a new and joyful vision of God as anointing man with his own spirit — a vision which flesh and blood could not reveal but the

Father in heaven. The endowment of love was to be a new and heavenly treasure within men of very practical worth, a strength of love which would save them, not only from sin's penalty, but from their sins; a wisdom of love which would teach them what to say to their persecutors when they were set upon their defence; an insight of love which would make them the light of the world.

From this it seems that God's forgiveness lifts man into a new relationship with his environment, or we may say the intimate and personal conviction of God's forgiveness only belongs to the man who has been thus lifted. In this environment there is nothing to fear. The Evil Power who tempts to sin and punishes the sinner has here no part. Again and again Jesus points out that fear belongs to a lower region, and not to that in which man estimates God as love, that fear only comes where faith is not. But the penalty of sin he always speaks of as an object of great fear; he urges the fear of it upon men. Indeed he taught that the penalty of sin, like the sin which involved it, was evil.

Thus we conclude, in harmony with the thought of all good men, that there must be a divine justice, as there must be a divine mercy; but we have reason to think the human mind has, as yet, no conception of what this divine justice is. The conclusion to which the gospel points is undoubtedly that put forward by the Johannine writings, which seek to express the divine justice by the word "love."

BOOK III

GOD'S CITADEL ON EARTH

CHAPTER I

THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS

We have tried to show that the works of Jesus must be the strongest and simplest expression of the revelation he came to bring. In the following chapters we shall be concerned with his works of healing, and first with his treatment of "unclean spirits," and with his doctrine concerning the kingdom of evil as therein exemplified.

In the present flux of thought and historical knowledge, suspense of judgment is the wisest attitude toward the problems connected with the ancient doctrines of good and bad spirits, and as to the true significance of the teaching of Jesus concerning them. At the same time, to ignore or mimimise any prominent feature in the record of Jesus, because we are still awaiting more light in the matter, must be inimical to progress. Truth has nothing to fear from the most searching examination of fact, and we are bound to make that examination, although it does not follow that with all the facts we are now able to muster we can arrive at any certain conclusion. It will, moreover, often be found that the hasty generalisations

of modern thought about ancient beliefs are of less substantial stuff than the beliefs they would supersede. Any belief that has held the world for ages is likely to bear a close relation to fact, even though the fact be wrongly interpreted.

The Christian thought of Europe from the first has always exercised a curious choice in regard to the teaching of Jesus about the unseen world, forcing a literal meaning on certain figurative passages in that teaching, and admitting the wholly figurative nature of others. This habit bears witness to the difficulty of knowing, in many cases, what he really meant — a difficulty, we may remark in passing, that shows the need of accepting his works as a clue to his words. In such a passage as that in which Jesus bids his disciples rejoice, not so much because spirits were in subjection to them, but rather because their names were written in the book of life, the scholarship of the Church has for the most part understood "the book of life" to be a figure of speech, while accepting the "spirits" as objective entities. Is this warranted? There was in very ancient thought an association between the casting out of demons and the practice of keeping a private name in some secret and sacred text. The mystic importance of a name, its influence on the fate of its bearer, the custom of writing the name in a sacred book in order to secure safety from ill-fortune — these notions are found in the most ancient magical formulas. Later, among the Jews we find the idea of an eternal book which was kept before God, and later again, the doctrine

that the whole history of men was written down in the eternal books. This last form of the idea was elaborated after Hellenism affected Jewish thought. This "book of life" was certainly not concrete; it was allied in nature rather to the Platonic "ideas." If we assume, as contemporary use seems to justify us in doing, that Jesus used the phrase, "the book of life," figuratively, are we justified in taking literally his words in the same passage about the evil "spirits"? This opens a large question on which modern science and historic demonology throw a much less certain light than the modern man often supposes.

We turn to consider the attitude of Jesus toward human ills and their cause, and find that he certainly appeared to give his authority to the belief in a separate Evil Will, subordinate to God, transcending man in evil power, and immanent in all man's wrongdoings and diseases. Is this view inconsistent with any knowledge we now possess? and if not, how far does it harmonise with it?

While we have no proof that all he said and did in this connection may not have been simply a parable teaching a higher truth, we are, by the laws of interpretation, compelled first to consider words and acts in their face meaning. Current opinion is disposed to treat the Evil One as a superstition, and to regard evil as only the negation of good. If we agree that to believe in an evil power outside ourselves that makes for unrighteousness is absurd, we must assume that our Lord's doctrine was a parable, unless it was a mistake.

Without coming to any dogmatic conclusion, let us inquire what reason there is for joining those who would cast out the Evil One and his agents from the arena of sane ideas.

In the region in which human thought can be confirmed by experience, we have to recognise the existence, side by side, of a multiplicity of wills. Experience also shows that those wills are not all good. Let the conception of a metaphysical dualism of good and evil be acknowledged untenable; but so also to most minds is the conception of a metaphysical multiplicity of wills; man's free will perishes in the Absolute just as surely as the devil perishes. Our point is that we cannot admit the reality of free will in the domain of practical reason and deny the reality of the evil will in the same domain.[1]

The facts of the religious consciousness appear to require a conception not only of a Supreme Will that is good, but of evil as a positive volitional force. The Christian's personal experience will in this matter weigh with him more than argument, and opinions will differ. We may take one illustration out of many that would serve to show the difficulty of considering evil as a mere negation. Let us take any body of men who certainly cherish what Dr. Gwatkin calls "the vital spark of mysticism" — "the conviction, acted on, that a true communion with the divine is given to all that purify themselves with all the force of heart and soul and mind." We must believe, as the tenor of their lives is good, that God finds en-

[1] See Appendix C.

trance to their minds in the religion they practise. We observe, however, that when some new movement of the higher life begins to stir about them, or, as we might put it, some new development of the Christ-life finds expression in some part of the public consciousness, it is this very class of religious men who commonly offer it the most violent opposition. It is not until the life of a generation has proved that the new thing is of God that they, or their successors, receive it. This seems to suggest that the very susceptibility of their nature to divine influence renders them also more open than irreligious men to fiendish influence. What they oppose is often a matter, not of belief, but of mere humanity. The nature of their opposition, its force and pertinacity, certainly suggest the work of a spiritual evil within their own spirits.

If we reject the idea of an Evil Will, spiritual and positive, are we prepared to support any alternative theory? Shall we say that moral evil is not a reality? that if a man tramples his child or his mother to death, his action is relatively the best that might be? Or, granting the reality of wrong, can we assume that in all this vast universe of dreadful a thing as sin occurs only on this atom of earth and only in the heart of man? Or, if we admit that the evil which is part of all things that we know may also be a part of vaster regions of life than we can conceive of, must we assume that it is always, everywhere, sporadic, and lacks any synthetic determination? We find a final Source and Centre of good to be a reasonable postulate

from the good we see everywhere; why, then, is such a postulate from omnipresent evil unreasonable? All that seems to be required to preserve the unity of nature is that the Evil Will should act under some law of self-destruction which keeps it subordinate to the Good Will which bringeth forth life.

Let us briefly glance at the history of this idea of an Evil Will in active antagonism to God, to see how far it may thus be justified.

We have now recovered from the graves of dead nations an account of the way in which the Gentile world before Christ expressed its religious passion, an account sufficiently clear for us to know how far the world had then come in its search after God. Voluminous liturgies, which date from some four millenniums before Christ, show well-established religious ideas, which were modified and developed, but not radically changed, in the succeeding centuries. From Babylonia and Assyria, from Egypt, especially from Persia and Greece, we gather elements that contributed to the religious beliefs of Palestine at the Christian era. In the forefront of all genuine, practical religion was the belief that misfortunes had their source in the unseen powers, and that relief from them must be sought by prayer addressed either to the better disposition of the very power which sent them, or to some other unseen power of a better disposition. In polytheistic religions there was a tendency to attribute benefits to the higher deities and afflictions to inferior powers; individual misfortunes, especially bodily ills, came to be regarded as the

work of minor deities, or, later, of mischievous spirits of a low order.

But all progress in the unification of knowledge seems to be dependent on the conception of a God supreme and good. The One of the scientist, the One of the philosopher, the One of the theologian, is the only satisfaction of reason and the great incitement to the search for truth. At the same time the mere conception of God as One was not sufficient for moral development; the One must also be good. We scarcely realise how slowly the need to think of God as moral has asserted itself even among the Hebrews. Up to a comparatively late date in Old Testament theology the conception of God's oneness led to making his spirit the immediate source and inspiration of all human qualities, — alike of love and hatred, truth and cunning, placability and anger, — just as the necessity of believing God to be one leads men now to suppose his will to be the direct source of all human fortune — of joy and sorrow, health and disease, scarcity and plenty. The later Jewish prophets, however, and the writers of Deuteronomy presented God as preferring justice and truth to license and dishonesty. Thus the Hebrew religion had the early distinction of attributing to God only what they thought to be moral goodness; and the most religious Jews before Christ came reached the idea that God's will was always on the side of moral right as they understood it.

We have already noted that among the heathen misfortunes of all sorts had come to be regarded either as the legitimate anger of good deities or as

the mischief inflicted by inferior powers. When the Jews had arrived at some distinction between moral good and moral evil, and realised that the first only could be attributed to God, they naturally thought of the source of moral evil as in opposition to God. If God could not tempt man to do evil, temptation was naturally attributed to another power. This power was not in any way co-equal with God or able to act without his permission, but still powerful in mundane affairs, as we see in the prologue to the Book of Job.

Although there can be no doubt that a belief in a malign spiritual kingdom or hierarchy came into the Jewish religion from heathen sources, chiefly those of the Babylonian stock, some equivalent for "Satan" must have loomed on their religious horizon in any case when their prophets perceived with ever-growing clearness that the inspiration of evil passions in the heart of man could no longer be attributed to God. The fact of its foreign source is not to the prejudice of the belief, because the earlier Jewish religious conceptions — of God, of holiness, of transgression, etc. — were originally from the same source, tapped, as one might say, farther back. Wherever learnt, the belief in a devil was bound to come. The conception of man as the origin of that profound principle which, opposed to good, appears to lie at the heart of all things that we know, and to be represented in some aspect of all things, was not possible to the ancient world, and therefore the conception of the Evil Will in the spiritual world was to them a necessity of thought.

Our question is whether we have outgrown this necessity. The notion of an Evil Will outside our own does not in the slightest degree explain the origin of evil; but, granting that evil exists and is permitted to run rampant for the sake of personal moral freedom, there is no law of reason which requires us to identify it with ourselves. It thus does not appear to be more superstitious to believe in the Evil One than to believe that man in this earthly life — a tiny span in the vast cycles of time — should have a monopoly in sin — the bye-product of personal free will. If we believe, as the Christian must, that God is omnipotent and good, and yet permits moral disorder in man, there is no fresh difficulty in holding to his goodness and omnipotence and admitting that moral disorder exists in the whole scheme of things as we know it, and beyond our knowledge. If A, out of the wickedness of his own heart, can do a cruel act to his neighbour, and B can yet believe that "God's in his heaven; all's right with the world," there is no fresh difficulty for B in believing that the Evil Will, out of the wickedness of his heart, has been at his evil work from the foundation of all worlds, causing all the cataclysms and cruelties of nature, while yet God is good and omnipotent. It is merely childish to say the one is tenable, the other untenable.

The dilemma, "If God is, whence comes evil? if he is not, whence comes good?" must remain the philosophic background to all religious speculation. We here assume that God is, and that evil

is; and we are concerned with what appears to be a confusion in the minds of us moderns, who believe that God is the supreme personality, who admit that there is evidence of moral disorder in this world, and yet adopt the idea, common nowadays, that to believe in the Evil One is superstitious. If we have no better reason than has appeared for refusing to interpret the exorcism of Jesus in its natural sense, we do not offer him the respect which we pay to any modern teacher.

Further than this, it would appear that a belief even in a multiplicity of devils is not unreasonable if we believe in human immortality. It is not unreasonable to suppose that among the spirits of the dead there are moral differences similar to those that exist in this life. Nor have we any reason to assume that the Evil Will may not use the worst of them to influence the affairs of this earth, through that mysterious connection between mind and brain of which we know nothing. As long as we frankly confess that we can know nothing about the influence of bad angels, and can joyfully resign ourselves to God's protection, we need not fear superstition. There is no more need to refer to the difficulties of a philosophic dualism in connection with the speculation about societies or kingdoms of bad spirits, than in connection with societies or kingdoms of bad men whom we see. Much that must appear to us grossly superstitious has been connected with such a belief, but this need not condemn the belief itself. Let us bear in mind that we are speaking of spirit, not matter; we are not referring to the

creatures of the spiritualist's imagination — creatures as grossly material as a gas or a ray of light or a sound. It was a superstition to believe that God made the world in six days; but it does not follow that it is a superstition to believe that God made the world. If it is a gross superstition to believe that any invisible spiritual being can have direct influence upon matter as we know it, it does not follow that spiritual intelligences around us cannot affect our minds, and through our minds our brains — the nature of the connection between our own minds and our brains being quite unknown; the fact of that connection being only an object of faith and a postulate of reason. Because we realise that outside the living organism spirit cannot affect matter, because we do not believe in poltergeists throwing stones, or in spirits making noises, or in any objective incarnation of a devil, such, for example, as that at which Luther aimed his inkpot, it does not follow that it is impossible to believe in evil spirits who might obtain possession of mind in man or brute.

Let us admit, then, that to believe in one supreme Good as the source and sustainer of all does not necessarily exclude a belief in an Evil Will, and in evil spirits controlled by him, who may, for all we know, work evil on our minds, and diseases on our bodies through our minds, and all sorts of pain and grief upon us through the minds and actions of other men. Wicked or diseased people on earth can do all this; why not wicked spirits in the unseen? But let it be noted that such a belief limits the channel of evil in this

world to the human mind; as far as we have any knowledge of moral evil, there only it enters into our experience; as far as we have any practical concern with it thence it proceeds. "Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts."

If we believe in human selves as apart from bodies, and in immortality, we by this belief have already in the invisible world enormous multitudes of human spirits. These are not all good; they are not all in one stage of progress; the degrees in which they are unrighteous, and the degrees in which they may be evolving into higher orders of being or degenerating, must be almost infinitely various — for evolution as we know it implies the progress of some and the degeneration of others. Again, all that we know of human spirits shows them to have not only individual but collective life. By their very nature they are forced to form themselves into larger psychological units — crowds, societies, kingdoms, hierarchies. The idea that at death the human soul, naked and alone, may aspire to hold communion with none but God, may be beautiful, but is foreign to any reality we know. The psychic necessity of loving the brother in order to love God probably obtains even more perfectly in the spirit world. We can hardly conceive of a humanity beyond the grave and gate of death broken up into the naked and desolate condition of separate units. Our spirits must cease to be what we understand as human when they cease to coalesce in certain common aspects of existence. Thus we are driven, either to deny human immortality, or to postulate

a change at death so great that it would destroy the continuity of human existence, or else to admit the probability of spirits and organisations of spirits bad enough and influential enough to be spoken about in such terms as those in which Jesus spoke of the kingdom of evil.

Lastly, as we look upon the vast universe, the myriad ranks of heavenly bodies and the ordered variety in vegetable and animal life, as our minds attain in all things to the principle, *natura non facit saltum*, it is not easy to conceive a world of spirits in which there is nothing at all but the One Supreme and Almighty and mankind. It is quite true that man has no absolute moral need to cast the net of his imagination over other beings and fix them in his creeds; but he is forced to admit the possibility of their existence, and of their varying moral character.

We thus see that, so far from the belief in a kingdom of evil being foolish, it is an inference consistent with our knowledge of self and our belief in God; and the belief in bad spirits is a fair inference from the belief in human immortality. If we get rid of the ancient belief in the Evil One, as, since the Reformation, certain parts of the world have got rid of the belief in demons, there is some evidence that we shall find that, out of our universities, out of the very heart of the latest and most serious attempts to re-construct intelligent belief upon what some thinkers conceive to be the ruins of Christian orthodoxy, the devils will issue again.

We have, in the region of pure metaphysic,

Dr. M'Taggart's suggestion of an eternal plurality of minds. He states his theory thus: —

"To sum up — the self answers to the description of the fundamental differentiations of the Absolute. Nothing else that we can know or imagine does so. The idea of the self has certain characteristics which can be explained if the self is taken as one of the fundamental differentiations but of which no explanation has been offered on any other theory, except that of rejecting the idea of the self altogether, and sinking into complete scepticism. The self is so paradoxical that we can find no explanation for it except its absolute reality." [1]

Prof. Gwatkin summarises Dr. M'Taggart's ultimate theory in the words, "The universe may be a harmonious system of persons with a tendency to improvement." [2] If this be a fair interpretation of the theory it would seem quite possible that, pending improvement, some of these eternal wills, including our own and those of our neighbours, may be devil-like rather than god-like.

We find the same suggestion of a plurality of minds expressed in a concrete religious form by Prof. James: —

"The only thing that religious experience unequivocally testifies to is that we can experience union with *something* larger than ourselves, and in that union find our greatest peace. Philosophy . . . and mysticism . . . identify the something with a unique God who is the all-inclusive soul

[1] *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 26.
[2] *The Knowledge of God*, preface, p. ix.

of the world. Popular opinion, respectful to their authority, follows the example which they set. Meanwhile . . . all the facts require is that the power should be other and larger than our conscious selves. Anything larger will do, if only it be large enough to trust for the next step. It need not be infinite, it need not be solitary. It might conceivably even be only a larger and more godlike self, of which the present self would then be but the mutilated expression, and the universe might conceivably be a collection of such selves, of different degrees of inclusiveness, with no absolute unity realised in it at all. Thus would a sort of polytheism return upon us." [1]

It will here occur to the reader that if men with a genius for wickedness are, like men with a genius for goodness, inspired by a larger power which is a super-mundane self, that self, in their case, is not a god but a devil. Indeed, this last writer goes on to reply something of the sort:—

"Upholders of the monistic view will say to such a polytheism that unless there be one all-inclusive God, our guarantee of safety is left imperfect. . . . Common sense is less sweeping in its demands than philosophy or mysticism have been wont to be, and can suffer the notion of this world being partly saved and partly lost." [1]

Thus it will be seen that the recent speculations of men whom it is not the fashion to regard as superstitious, postulate no universe in which there is not ample space for evil personalities, transcend-

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, by Prof. W. James, pp. 525, 526.

ing human beings, yet immanent in them; and so from another side we are led to think that there is nothing unreasonable or superstitious in accepting such a belief in the existence and working of an Evil World, and even of an evil hierarchy, as the words and acts of Jesus, understood in their plain sense, involve. If he did not teach this he used the current doctrine of the devil to teach a more terrible spiritual truth, a truth which we can only learn by giving the utmost heed to the parable.

CHAPTER II

THE SCORN OF SUPERSTITION

THERE is a prevalent opinion that the modern man, having before his eyes the triumph of the scientific method, knows how to apply the word "superstition." This is the opinion alike of the militant materialist and the average God-fearing man. How easily do we moderns class together bygone theories of the possibilities of mind and matter, — astrology, alchemy, magic, and the like, — and whenever we find a supposed trace of them in the common mind at present we call it "superstition." In so doing we show a lack of that necessary element of a good modern education, the sense of the historic continuity and oneness of the racial mind. This would show us that we are only the product of our fathers, made of the same matter and spirit as those who peopled the plain of Edinu and chronicled in the old story the passionate fear that the increase of knowledge would cause a rupture with God. Their knowledge was only comparative, so is ours; their opinions were immature, so are ours. We find in ourselves their religious antagonisms,

faith calling knowledge demoniacal, and knowledge calling the search after spirit in all things, superstitious. We also inherit from those we have called antediluvian the tendency to think that we live in the end of time, that upon us the ends of the world are come; by direct inheritance from every generation of which we have any record we come by the idea that we of the latest half century have acquired the secret of the world!

The effort after the unknown, the search for spiritual power, has always existed; we call the earlier forms of it "superstition"; and the reason why these earlier forms of faith appear to us more absurd than they are is that we do not grasp the reality in them. We find in old religious liturgies many sorts of impetuous intellectual effort combined — imagination, religion, the power of reasoning and observation of fact, all confused. To-day we have differentiated; we try to distinguish between the functions of poetry, priesthood, theology, and science. But in those high civilisations that flourished before Israel became a nation the man with a religious vocation must needs be poet, scientist, theologian, medicine man, and priest. As man of science he compiled incantations which embodied his observations on disease and misfortune; as priest he edited and repeated liturgies; and we find the poetry, the piety, the material knowledge of the time, confused together.

Superstition often appears to differ from poetry only by the degree in which those who speak in figures perceive the difference between what

they speak of and the figure in which they clothe it. Keeping this distinction in mind we shall perceive that in many of its historic beliefs the racial mind has expressed itself in figures by that power of natural imagery which is the very mint in which our words are coined, and then by degrees has fallen to worshipping the letter which kills, producing thus a gross superstition which a little later it discards as ancestral folly, and in the resulting effort to think for itself the racial mind again finds its most ancient thought returning in the disguise of a new discovery.

Taking, for example, man's idea of God, we find that it has gone through such transitions. God spoke; God stretched forth his hand; God walked in the garden; God drew his bow; God wielded his sword: God appeared in fire and cloud. How far the first efforts of man to express what he knew to be invisible, what he felt to be transcendent, were literal or figurative we cannot tell, for he himself had no distinction between letter and figure; all his letters were figures. But since he was aware that the sounds by which he denoted earthly things denoted really some name of his own conferred on the things, and not the things themselves, — and the figurative nature of the earliest language has been abundantly proved to us, — we have little foundation for the accusation that when he first coined phrases to express invisible power he was deceived by them. But as the letter became more and more sacred, the common mind fell into the ruts of common thought, and handed on from generation to

generation superstitions which the seer — prophet or priest or poet — was for ever warring against and never vanquishing. Perhaps the latest phase of this long battle is its best illustration, because it is the one most familiar to us. How necessary and desirable in the course of last century was the sceptical protest against a very small and crude explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the "plan of salvation" then rife! The most lovely and gracious figures of Hebrew poetry, of the parables of Jesus, of the Christian mystics, or Christian poets had become to the common religious mind like the dolls or tin soldiers of a nursery play-box, and were set out and made to go through their paces in the homilies of almost every Catholic and Protestant divine. Science had opened up illimitable regions never before discerned. We looked for the first time down the immeasurable ages of our geological past, and peered into a future measured only by the slow cooling of the sun; we saw into the depths of the universe as it floated across the strongest telescope, measuring its space by the transmission of light, and into the infinite gradations of perfect organisms which the strongest microscope disclosed. Was it any wonder that the Power which could perfect the iridescence on the wing of an insect too small for the natural eye, which could shepherd the whirl of suns whose light when it reached us had left them a century before, which had brought all things into existence by the millennial processes of evolution, — was it any wonder that such a

Power appeared to be most inadequately described in a literal acceptance of the machinery of Dante or Milton, by the theologies of Wesley or Newman or Jonathan Edwards? Even "the sinless years that breathed beneath the Syrian blue" appeared to have but an unimportant connection with the Creator and Sustainer of the new immensities of creation. To the Unitarian the idea of the infinite fostering love of a Creator seemed belittled by the doctrine of the Incarnation; to the scientist the idea of infinite force seemed the most adequate to express ultimate reality; and from both standpoints the minds of many easily escaped into the idea that any suggestion of personality was belittling to God, that it was more reverent, as well as more appropriate, to conceive God in terms of force, or by means of infinite attributes, in so far as we conceived him at all. These were large ideas; they carried one generation of thinkers into an airy place where they could turn and think with fine scorn of all they called "anthropomorphic religion." But soon came revulsion from that first boyish materialism of scientific progress, and men of science were carried back in the direction of idealism, reverting to thought instead of sense as the basis of knowledge; while the religious thought of those who had never bowed the knee to materialism, leaving those things that were behind and pressing forward, as thought always must in trying to discover wherein for man reality consists, found it only within the self; and with this general change of philosophic attitude

came a fresh reverence for the manifestation of God as a Person.

The only reality which man cannot think away, the only force which he cannot conceive in terms of weight or measure, is personality. All else of which we can think, such as matter, force, life, in any sense in which we can conceive them, can, now one, now another, in thought be measured and eliminated at will; the thought that measures and eliminates remains, an unmeasurable power. The thought, its way of directing itself, its way of impressing itself, is personality. The only personality that comes within the range of reasoned knowledge is human; the existence of God is an inference of faith; and we attribute to him our conception of this ultimate reality. Of infinity and all its attributes we can have no conception, although we image to ourselves the huge or the interpenetrating or the irresistible; but it is a dangerous business to bow down to mere images of anything in heaven above or in the earth beneath, even magnified by our conception of infinity. Our only real choice lies between attributing to God either one set of personal attributes or another; and all who admit that in the character of Jesus we have the ideal human personality must attribute that character to God.

To sketch, even as slightly as in the foregoing paragraph we have sketched, the history of the notion of God, the many beliefs that have undergone similar transitions, would take too long; but let us pass to that fantastic "superstition" with which we are immediately concerned, which ascribed

all disease in men and animals to the intrusion and indwelling of certain mischievous entities that we call demons. We are all familiar with the absurdities of demonology, and the magical rites that were used as prevention and cure. When we roam at large among all these strange fancies, we find, among much that seems senseless, some significant facts. The forefathers of our intellect, they who made the alphabets of all our learning, thought that the disease-demons frequented solitary places and dry places — the solitudes of the Eastern desert.[1] Picture these places, — desert highways often strewn with the slaughter of the sun which strikes at mid-day, or waterless caverns, where the beasts, seeking shade and hiding, lie down to die, or stony rock-ledges of the mountains which men chose for tombs. In such places, when the wind raised the dust-cloud, it was dangerous to go far. A demon passing in the air and striking against a man had no choice but to enter in and multiply within him.[2] After being in such a place a man must perform ablutions as well as say his prayers, for the demons of dry places hated water.[3] Or

[1] "The plague demon in the desert like a cloud of dust makes his way . . . though he hath neither hands nor feet, ever goes round and round." Translation of magical text, Appendix III., Sayce's *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 477.

[2] "The demons stumble upon their victims, as it were, and strike whomsoever they happen to encounter." (From Maklu series of tablets quoted by M. Jastrow Jr., in art. "Religion of Babylonia"; see extra vol. of Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*.)

[3] I have washed my hands, cleansed my body,
With the pure waters of a source that arises in Eridu.
Whatever is evil, whatever is not good,
That is lodged in my body, in my flesh, in my limbs. (*Ibid.*)

again, in deep shades of forests the disease-demons were rife, especially at sunset or at dew-fall and until the sunrise. Crowded market or inn was a place of danger. These demons could enter into a man with the air he breathed, with the water or milk he drank, or with the meat he ate.[1] One human being could infect another with them by breath, by spittle, or by the presence necessary for a mere look.[2] Especially was the embrace of the harlot-witch dangerous, the wound of a bull's horn, or the bite of an animal. The dog kind, the serpent kind, or — let us note — the mosquito kind, were more apt than others to convey the disease-demon.

There were many full-blown fancies about the monstrous appearance of these demons, such fancies as always gather about the invisible; or about their nature, as that they were the souls of dead men; but from the sum of all the incantations against them we gather that these imaginative additions to the doctrine had no general authority. No shape or size is really attributed to disease-demons, for they could dwell in hand or foot or eye, nay, they could multiply and swarm in any

[1] "All sickness was ascribed to demoniacal possession; the demon had been eaten with the food and drunk with the water, or breathed in with the air, and until he could be expelled there was no chance of recovery." (Sayce's *Hibbert Lectures*, Lect. IV., p. 310. See also Lect. V., p. 330.)

[2] "The witch's spittle is poisonous, and can torture one on whom it falls or whoever treads on it." (M. Jastrow in art. "Religion of Babylonia," in extra vol. of Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*.)

member of the body, and they could be drawn out by way of the nose or the mouth.[1]

These beliefs concerning disease-demons seem to have prevailed from all time; in the ages before the patriarchs they were well developed. They continued to be prevalent in Christendom till the period of the Reformation, and then still prevailed among the unlettered, knowing no distinction of Protestant or Papist. Then, as we know, came a period of great light, when among the learned no superstition appeared so paltry as that attributing diseases to invisible living creatures which could be inhaled with the air, or drunk or eaten, which entered into men from the dry dust as it rode on the wind, or from the bite of creatures that fly or creep in the night. But Heaven did not permit men a long interval of such dry light, for the tale of the disease-demons soon issued again from the very places whence it had first been cast out with contumely — from the laboratory and the library. We may further remark that the popular imagination concerning the germs of disease is still as remote from the actual facts revealed by the microscope as if it still clothed them in the anthropomorphic language of unconscious poetry; nor is the scientist any nearer an explanation of the mystery of the life which animates them and us than were the framers of the earliest magical incantations.

Yet how often we have heard of the happy

[1] See Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book VIII., chap. ii. 5; and for Jewish familiarity with Gentile demonology see Cheyne, *Introd. to Isaiah*, p. 210.

relief from demonism that our modern enlightenment gives to the mind! Indeed, many are so impressed with the importance of this relief that they point to religion as the evil mania which fills our atmosphere with terrors of the unseen. One of their stock objections to the gospel is what they call its "demonology"; yet, as we have just seen, there was a great deal in the ancient belief as to the causes of disease which has recently been confirmed by the bacteriologist. Are we not now afraid of the dust of dry places? Do we not fear the night of malarial districts, when the gnats and beasts, infected by malaria, are abroad and seeking prey? How could we better describe the attitude of man to the microbe than in these spirited lines, an incantation to drive away the disease-demon, from the fifth tablet of the Maklu series? —

Away, away, far away, far away.
For shame, for shame, fly away, fly away.
Round about face, go away, far away.
Out of my body, away.
Out of my body, far away.
Out of my body, for shame.
Out of my body, fly away.
Out of my body, round about face.
Out of my body, go away.
Into my body do not return.
To my body draw not nigh.
To my body do not approach.
Into my body do not force your way.
My body torture not.[1]

[1] Art. "Religion of Babylonia," by M. Jastrow Jr., in extra vol. of Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

We do not believe in wizard or witch, but we believe in infection and contagion, which obey laws very similar to the supposed methods of witchcraft. The ancients also arrived at the conclusion that certain human beings had a peculiar power of infecting their neighbours with demons; just as to-day, if we had no idea of the laws that govern infection and contagion, we might suppose, after careful observation, that people suffering from infectious or contagious disease, and able to go about, were endowed with a spiritual power of doing mischief to their neighbours. Can we find a better description of one going about in the last feverish stage of tubercular disease than the following lines from the third tablet of the same series? —

> Who art thou, witch,
> Who carries the word of my misfortune in her heart,
> Whose tongue brings about my destruction,
> Through whose lips I am poisoned,
> In whose footsteps death follows?[1]

The whole theory of demoniacal possession was historically a survival of primitive animism; so is our theory of God and of immortality, of justice and of mercy. All these had their almost indistinguishable beginnings in the earliest progressive religion of which we can find any trace; all these lie like unused, atrophied organs within the most decadent religions we can investigate. That a belief is a survival of animism does not prove it

[1] Art. "Religion of Babylonia," by M. Jastrow Jr., in extra vol. of Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible.*

false; but the fancies of animism prove how prone human nature is to invest any power that it does not understand with fantastic attributes. Indeed, at the present day there is a rapidly growing imagination concerning the deadly nature of disease germs, which makes them loom large out of all proportion to other facts of life, and bids fair to be a superstition as paralysing as any that troubled the ancient world. The case of the wretched city clerk who was starving because he had dispensed with almost every article of diet, fearful lest each in turn might be infected by noxious germs, is not a worse instance of exaggerated fancies that amount to superstition than is that of the millionaire who isolated his children from all wholesome companionship for fear of infection. To such men the microbe is a veritable monster. Such terrors give rise to imaginary shapes of undue proportion; stern truth can make small headway against them when popular; the best antidote is a rival imagery of quack medicines and patent germicides, by exaggeration equally false to fact.

Many superstitions may be effete, but we are not yet able completely to distinguish between the follies and the true insight of our ancestors. Much that we have sometimes thought divine revelation has proved with larger knowledge to be puerile;[1] much that we think puerile may prove our wisdom. Since we have found the equivalent of disease-demons in the microcosms that cause so many of our bodily ailments, we should do well to

[1] *E.g.*, Regulations concerning the Hebrew taboo.

realise that the glib statement that demoniacal possession was a mere fancy, is not a sign of great scholarship or great wisdom. Suspense of judgment is the wiser attitude toward the belief, so long held by the world-mind, that afflictions of the spirit may be caused by some external spiritual influence.

Let us not be misunderstood. All the facts of experience — so-called material facts, so-called mental facts — alike have to be accounted for in the philosophy of every inquiring mind. According to a man's ultimate assumptions will be the explanation that satisfies him. Naturalism, whose postulate is that physical phenomena are our primary facts, traces physical sequences of cause and effect, and from its point of view any fact is "explained" when its place is assigned in such a sequence. The physicist seeks no further explanation, for he has found all he started to find. The psychologist, in the same scientific spirit, studies the facts of mind; he perceives their strict correlation with physical facts; but he may decide, as our leading English psychologist [1] does, that he cannot resolve the sequence of mental facts into the physical sequence, and regard the one as the mere collateral product of the other. Then he is driven to ask the question, "May it not be that the physicist deals only with the *utterances* of what we may call the *insides* of things?" [2] Is not the mechanical explanation of the world an abstraction from the actual world in which we live

[1] Dr. James Ward.

[2] *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, by Dr. Ward, vol. ii. p. 81.

and struggle? The inquirer who reaches this point may proceed to postulate mind as the prior and fundamental reality. Starting from that postulate he sees that "the material and mechanical is not fundamental, but that the teleological and spiritual underlie it and are pre-supposed by it." [1] With his idealistic hypothesis he views the facts of experience in another light. He does not deny the physicist's knowledge so far as it goes, but he starts with an assumption that enables him, as he conceives, to understand the facts of experience more completely, to give a deeper explanation of them.

Let us suppose that speculative philosophy and practical religion push a man to postulate, not merely intelligence but a Supreme Intelligence, as the only sufficient reason of creation; and suppose him further to find that experience, the source of all knowledge, points to the existence of an evil principle, subordinate no doubt to the Supreme Will, yet able to will, and to act on the human mind, in contravention of the Supreme Will; such hypothesis will give him a new standpoint from which to view the facts of experience, but it will not lead him to contradict or deny the physical explanation of experience, or the other and additional explanation offered by the philosopher who insists on the prior reality of mind. Our inquirer is unable to find any account of the facts of existence satisfying to himself unless he postulate something other than they can teach him as to the nature of supreme reality. His difference with the

[1] *Ibid.* p. 253.

mere physicist does not lead him to deny that the physicist has any explanation to offer; there can be no question that every fact of experience can have its physical cause and consequence pointed out. Much less does it lead him to deny the idealist philosophy. The question for him is whether these truths are the most satisfactory explanation he can reach.

To return, what do we know about demoniacal possession? Body we know, and the disease-germs of the body we know; functional disorders or organic changes we know to be the concomitants of all nervous or mental troubles. Mind apart from body we do not know; we do not know what influences of outer spirit may work upon incarnate spirit, and be the cause of those so-called hysterical disorders affecting the moral and spiritual nature for which the religious mind hardly finds adequate cause in brain or nerve. Our contention is that the hypothesis which Jesus seemed to countenance in explanation has nothing incredible in it.

We have certainly made progress in knowledge. Every one who believes that good lies at the heart of things must believe that this progress is real and, even if chequered, will be continuous. At the same time we know that at the beginning and at the end of every known sequence of fact or thought lies the unknown. Different epochs produce different theories with regard to the borderlands of knowledge; farther off there is not even theory to support thought. It is only those who lack the power to learn from history who

think that the tendency of thought for one age, although pointing for some time in one direction, necessarily points to finality. Our progress is rather to be observed in the ceaseless shifting of opposing races and schools. The progress of our knowledge is like an apocalyptic vision; always, everywhere, we have doctrine warring against doctrine and theory against theory, men's hearts failing them because the very foundations of their thought are shaken. In the gloom of each conflict to some God seems gone from heaven; the periodic pulse of things, by which order is held out of chaos, beats low, and parts of knowledge that seemed as steadfast as the stars in the firmament are lost. That which emerges out of the din and darkness is the wiser man, not with higher powers but with wider opportunity. He knows that if he goes backward he fails. He must press forward; yet, as he goes, something in the creeds that he thinks to be dead rises and meets him after many days, like a child advancing from the dawn of the morning.

CHAPTER III

THE PERMANENT NEED OF 'EXORCISM'

JESUS gave a large part of his ministry to the restoration of free will in those to whom it was lost. He chose to restore self-control to reputed demoniacs, not as he healed those suffering from other diseases, but by addressing, or appearing to address, some extraneous spiritual entity within them. They had lost self-control, and he could not ask them for personal faith; but why should he not have restored them to self-possession as he restored the dead to life, without assuming the position of the exorcist? It is the apparent assumption by Jesus of this rôle, his apparent acceptance of the current belief that the indwelling demons were living subjects of the kingdom of evil, that marks off these marvels of healing as a distinct class.

Several theories are advanced to account for the action of Jesus. One theory would admit that possession by demons was real in those times, but would say it was local and temporary. We may dismiss this view as intolerable. Whatever was the cause of diseases affecting the volitional power

then must be the cause of them now. The forms of our diseases change with our conditions — *e.g.*, the Black Plague common in the past was a worse scourge than influenza; but no such extraordinary change has come over the race as that epidemics might be caused by intrusive disease-germs at one period in man's history, and be independent of any disease-germ in another period. In the same way, there is certainly no such radical difference in human conditions as to make possible so extraordinary and so enormous a change as this — that control of the human will should in the first century have been assumed at times by a foreign and mischievous will belonging to some low form of spirit life, and in the twentieth century men should be liable to no such accidents.

Another theory is that God, having put on our flesh and its attendant circumstance, also accepted the ignorance and superstition of his age, and believed in an arch-devil and in minor demons because his neighbours did, and not because such ideas represented truth. Whether Jesus accepted the limitations of his age in mundane matters it is of less importance for us to decide; but if he had no higher degree of insight than others into the unseen world we can only learn from him as from any other great ethical teacher. All mystics claim direct intuitive knowledge of the spirit world; and if Jesus has anything to impart to us which we could not discover for ourselves from physical fact and reasoned induction, he must have it by intuitive cognisance of the conditions of our spiritual life.

Another view seems to be that Jesus addressed the demon because that was the only method that carried conviction of the cure to minds convinced of the reality of demon possession. We take a passage from Prof. Harnack's *What is Christianity?* which countenances this view: —

"The notion of people being 'possessed' was current everywhere; nay, even the science of the time looked upon a whole section of morbid phenomena in this light. But the consequence of these phenomena being explained as meaning that some evil and invisible power had taken possession of a man, was that mental affections took forms which looked as if an alien being had really entered into the soul. There is nothing paradoxical in this. If modern science were to declare nervous disease to consist, in great part, of 'possession,' and the newspapers were to spread this announcement amongst the public, the same thing would recur. We should soon have numerous cases in which nervous patients looked as if they were in the grip of an evil spirit, and themselves believed that they were so. . . . The best means of encountering these forms of mental disease is to-day, as it was formerly, the influence of a strong personality. It is able to threaten and subdue the 'devil,' and so heal the patient." [1]

We would suggest that to make the belief of the patient that he was possessed by an alien spirit the essential characteristic of those cases treated by Jesus as demoniacal, is untrue to the record. Our Lord appears to have used a com-

[1] *What is Christianity?* pp. 60, 61.

mand to the alien spirit as the means of cure in cases of children and maniacs, where one cannot suppose the patient to have been capable of holding any theory about his own affliction. When Jesus said to the Syrophenician, "The devil is gone out of thy daughter," he did not use that expression for the sake of impressing the daughter. Further, to suppose an hallucination on the part of the patient and his friends to lie at the root of the question, and to be the only reason of the method used by Jesus in treating hysterical disorders, is, in the face of all we know of such disorders, a superficial view. As a matter of fact, we know that all through human history man has been liable to all sorts of nervous or hysterical compulsions, of which the essential characteristic is loss of self-control, not, and most emphatically not, his knowledge that self-control has been lost.

Jesus found in the men of his time many beliefs concerning the spirit-world and man's relation to it. To some of these beliefs he set the seal of his authority; some he set aside as negligible; some he denied. He certainly taught much less concerning this adjacent world than most people suppose. There are but two reverent and rational explanations of his attitude to the demonology of his time. Either he must have wished to endorse as truth such part of the popular belief as he incorporated into his own ministry, or he must have used it as a parable to convey a truth concerning the loss of volitional freedom that was of the utmost importance for us to learn.

It is worth while to study carefully the belief

in possession as countenanced by Jesus. His belief in demoniacal possession has nothing in common with the modern superstitions which accrete themselves round such terms as "ghosts," "spirit control," "poltergeist," etc. We have no need to think of shades hovering in the air. Two salient features in the attitude of Jesus contrast with many notions we have been accustomed to associate with it. First, he seems to have attached no moral blame to the condition of being demonised; his words concerning certain physical diseases may possibly imply that they were brought on by sin, but there is no suggestion of this in his dealing with the poor wretches whom by exorcism he set free as from a degrading servitude. The second point is that he gives no colour to the idea that the demons had human personality. It is true that when he cured these cases he never spoke to the sufferer; he commanded the demon; so that, if his action is not a parable, there is evidence that he thought he perceived an indwelling spirit with so much of intelligence that it could obey a command. But we can command many animals by word or by mere presence; we do not therefore suppose them to have the attributes of human personality. That he regarded demons as impersonal must be obvious to those who mark with what dignity our Lord invested the human spirit, either saved or lost, and what indignity he meted out to demons. All that is necessarily implied in the method of Jesus in these cases is that there are low forms of spirit-life capable of some degree of intelligence and

volition, able to attack and injure the powers of the human spirit, as a germ of physical disease may, with or without their concomitance, attack and injure the powers of the human body.

In the facts of life before us there is much that appears to harmonise with such a belief. There is an analogy between the infectious diseases of the body and those nervous affections which impair self-control but stop short of insanity proper. Just as the bacterial germ passes from body to body, spreading physical disease, so does a malign spirit seem to pass from mind to mind and even from animal to human mind. Nervous diseases are always catching and often epidemic. They have produced the worst epidemics the world has known. Just as bodily diseases are rife when human beings live in close air, dirt, and want of healthy exercise; so when they live in ignorance, moral turpitude, and lack of intellectual interests, do mental ailments prevail; and this is the effect even when every physical advantage is possessed.

Let us cite a few of these mental epidemics.

There is what is called "The Children's Crusade."

"In whole large districts of Europe young children, who belonged to a generation born when the population had been decimated by the Crusades, rushed from the towns in troops, and, joining others on the highways, marched day after day, they knew not where or why, but, as they said, bound for Jerusalem. They begged their food as they passed, but would be controlled by no one. The King of France issued a personal edict to the

children, but neither in France nor Germany could the epidemic be allayed. Persuasions, threats, punishments, were as futile as the king's command. Bolts and bars could not hold the children. If shut up, they broke through doors and windows, and rushed to take their places in the processions which they saw passing by. If the children were detained so that escape was impossible they pined away." [1]

We know how far they went, and in what numbers, and to what destruction. Neither the physical nor psychological explanations, although true as far as they go, seem to exhaust the matter.

Take, again, the crusade against the Albigenses:

"According to Albert von Stade, a peculiar religious mania broke out among women; thousands of them, stark naked and in deep silence, as if stricken with dumbness, ran frantically about the streets. In Luttich many of them fell into convulsions of ecstasy." [2]

The epidemic which offers an apparent refutation of Professor Harnack's argument is the mania of witchcraft, a mental fever which raged in Europe for almost two centuries. In this mania we see the sort of possession which Professor Harnach has in mind — hundreds of people of all ages and classes, accused of being possessed with devils, usually coming to believe that they were so possessed, confessing to possession, and acting in accordance with the

[1] *The Psychology of Suggestion*, by Boris Sidis, p. 324.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 323.

belief. But these victims of persecution were few compared with the tens of thousands of otherwise sane men and women who, not knowing themselves possessed, were really under the mad compulsion of bringing such accusations, of hunting out, torturing, and burning innocent victims.

"The terror of mysterious evil agencies fell on the spirits of men. The demon of fear seemed to have obsessed the mind of European humanity. Continental Europe, especially France, Germany, and Switzerland, suffered greatly from the epidemic. . . . High and low were attacked by the malady without any discrimination. In fact, the more learned one was the stronger was the malady, the more acute was the fear of inimical mysterious agencies. One can hardly find in the records of human crime anything more disgusting, more infamous, than this insane systematic persecution of feeble women and tender children. . . . The spirit of persecution did not spare even the little ones. The number of children on the list is great. . . . On American ground we find, on the accusation of a few hysterical girls, twenty innocent persons condemned to death." [1]

In this instance we must perceive that the persecutors had all the symptoms of lack of self-possession, with no consciousness of being possessed.

It would be easy to multiply instances and shocking descriptions of such "possession." We here cite but one more — a description of excitement at American revivals in the last century: —

[1] *The Psychology of Suggestion*, by Boris Sidis, pp. 339, 341, 342.

"In many places the religious epidemic took the form of laughing, dancing, and barking or dog manias. Whole congregations were convulsed with hysterical laughter during holy service. In the wild delirium of religious frenzy people took to dancing, and at last to barking like dogs. They assumed the posture of dogs, moving about on all fours, growling, snapping the teeth, and barking with such an exactness of imitation as to deceive any one whose eyes were not directed to the spot. Nor were the people who suffered so mortifying a transformation always of the vulgar classes: persons of the highest rank in society, men and women of cultivated minds and polite manners found themselves by sympathy reduced to this degrading situation." [1]

Lastly, take a description of a modern financial crisis by an economic writer. After referring to the extravagant projects afterward known as the South Sea Bubble he says: "Every great crisis reveals the excessive speculations of many houses which commonly had not begun or had not carried very far those speculations, till they were tempted by the daily rise of prices and the surrounding fever. At most periods of great commercial excitement there is some admixture of the older kind of investing mania. . . . The mania of 1825 and the mania of 1866 were striking examples of this. People speculate in bubble companies and in worthless shares. Almost everything will be believed for a little while. The counters in the gambling mania, the shares in the companies

[1] *The Psychology of Suggestion*, by Boris Sidis, p. 352.

created to feed the mania, are discovered to be worthless when the reaction comes." [1]

But indeed we do not need to go so far afield, or into the excitement of great epidemics, to come across afflictions of the human spirit which have many symptoms in common with cases of "possession," although not that one symptom desiderated by Professor Harnack, the belief in being possessed. We all know the "unhappy member" of the family, with whom self-consciousness and emotional excitement form a disease, to whom all passing events are distorted by uncontrolled egotistical emotions, who, alas, from birth to the hour of death is a burden and a perplexity to relatives. Have we not here the same perplexing phenomenon, modified by all that education, medical science, and even religion, can do?

Whether the causes of psychic phenomena are automatic or spiritualistic, what is called the "mediumistic temperament" is a fact, and probably there is no human being who does not at some time experience the "mediumistic condition" in greater or less degree. The condition can be encouraged and emphasised, it can be ignored and minimised, while the mind is still in control. It has its uses as well as its abuses; but whether it opens the windows of the human mind to other tenants or not, is, so far as science goes, matter only for presumption, negative or affirmative. Alas, the borderland between self-control and the want of it, is wide, and by our present science dimly lit, full of the dread possibilities of mental

[1] *Lombard Street*, by Walter Bagehot, chap. vi.

diseases. The healthy and the superficial laugh at these freaks; the wisest and most deeply learned fear them, while at the same time they know that fear itself is the worst and most deadly enemy of health. The wise physician to-day regards every habit, however trivial, that indicates the failure of self-control, as a symptom which may be prolific of greater evil than the microbe of any organic disease; but he also knows, and acts upon the knowledge, that the less the subject of this symptom fears it, the more he ignores or forgets it, the more likely he is to trample it under foot.

There are several types of "hysteria" proper with which most of us are familiar. (We use the foolish word "hysteria" for want of a better.) The first we may picture as the "demon" of unrest. It is seen in the individual who has been under some strain of work or emotion, and has succumbed to it so far as to lose the power of attention. He may be fidgety, irritable, and in other ways annoying; but the chief symptom is the fact that he cannot spend his leisure in the repose he so much needs, or devote to his work the continued, concentrated attention which would produce the best in quantity and quality. The next type is perhaps more common in women; we may call it the "demon" of emotional vanity. It is seen in an abnormal craving for sympathy and admiration, or for novelty. If husband, children, or friends remit for a day their acts of obvious devotion, some misfortune occurs of which the hysteric is the heroine, and in which

her pathetic or heroic behaviour recalls their attention. If she meets with reproach, or even with only calm civility, she suffers all the agony of spirit that cruelty or insult might evoke. Men there are like this, but such women are unfortunately comparatively common. Again, there is a type in which we may see the "demon" of instability, apparent in the man or woman who lacks either decision or resolution. Those who lack the former are thrown into distress by being asked to decide upon a reasonable plan of action with which others can arrange their plans. They change and change about with regard to what they will do, and when and how they will do it, till the nervous force of all concerned is exhausted, and only emergency pushes them to action. The other variety are as full of decisions as an egg is full of meat. They are always embarking on some course of action, and are deeply offended when others will not join them; but they are not able to adhere to any plan for more than a short time. The worst of all, perhaps, is the "demon" of jealousy, too well known to need description. All these types can be seen in a more blatant but more elemental form in the youth of both sexes: we have the girl who is always ill when she does not want to do something, and always well when she does; the youth who is always idle, yet always indulging large intentions of ambitious work, and many other varieties, including those classified as melancholia, fanaticism, etc., nervous afflictions which are, if possible, more afflicting to the onlookers than to the patient,

and which have in common this, that they all seem to be not diseases but faults, and faults that would be corrected if the patient could only see himself as others see him. The more carefully we watch, however, the more we realise that, whether or not there was an hour in the life of each when the fault was under control of the will, it has passed beyond that control, and become uncontrollable in a sense in which faults due to reasoned motives are not uncontrollable. For example, a man may lose his temper a thousand times on provocation, but if he constantly becomes angry without provocation he has passed over the border-line of normal self-control. Or a woman may frequently tell lies in order to produce the desired impression, but when she cannot describe any incident without displaying herself as being admired, or suffering neglect, there is something other than a moral fault to be combated.

Good conditions have done much, have made the modern hysteric a less violent, less convulsive, less noticeable person than the hysteric of less civilised conditions. Just as the most revolting bodily diseases have given place to milder forms, so the hysteric of to-day is more sedate, apparently more rational, than even the person who indulged in the fainting fits and shrieking fits described in the literature of the eighteenth century. That century in its turn displays a more moderate form than is seen in the convulsions and manias of the Dark Ages. But are these poor creatures nowadays less unhappy? Do they create less un-

happiness? Have we come any nearer than did the ancients to understanding the cause of mental compulsions, or as near to their cure?

Whether Jesus believed in demoniacal possession, or used it as a parable to teach a more profound truth, is not essential. The lesson is plain. It is medical science — all honour to it — that is now forcing the first elements of this lesson upon the attention of the Church. The hysteric is not able to cure himself. To oppose his actions is to increase his unreasonable excitements; to yield to his every whim is as harmful. His malady has a moral element in it, but he is rarely to blame for contracting it; he has more control over his will than he exercises, but to treat him as a wilful sinner is worse than useless. All such disorders are accompanied by some abnormal physical change in the body — the disorder of some nerve centre or congestion of some portion of the brain — which from the physician's point of view is their cause. The doctor tries his medical treatment first. When it is, as it most often is, in vain, most doctors will admit that what they call the physical cause can only be cured, if at all, by some powerful and external stimulant to the patient's mind. Cures by such means are rare, but are well authenticated and not in any way miraculous. The only hope, the doctors tell us, for the majority of hysterical patients is that they may come in contact with some strong mental alterative — a commanding personality, an overpowering emotion, or an urgent practical necessity, which may compel them into reasoned and definite

courses of action and in so doing restore to them the power of self-direction. But alas, these same doctors agree that for one case that is cured, hundreds and thousands remain uncured, a source of mischief in every society and of constant pain in almost every domestic circle.

It is not — as some modern writers would assure us — the belief that these most miserable maladies are wrought by unseen powers of evil that makes life gloomy, but the fact that such maladies exist, and that they are common, and that medecine knows no cure for them. By endorsing the popular belief in demoniacal possession, or by using it as a parable, Jesus taught—with the modern doctor—that there was no use in wasting words with the patient or in expecting faith and obedience from the "possessed." He called to their relief the family and the Church. He demanded faith first from the interceding friend. "O woman, great is thy faith; the demon is gone out of thy daughter." And the same with the father of the epileptic boy. He demanded most faith from the representatives of his kingdom — the would-be exorcists of his infant Church. From them he demanded great faith and prayer. He said, by his own ministry as an exorcist, "Here is a terrible evil, which is directly opposed to God's will and man's welfare; and it must be faced and abolished by men who will lend themselves as instruments to God's will." No magic was required; God's intention was certain, his power indubitable, the result of fearless faith invariable. Before any man — one of the Twelve, one of the Seventy, one of the sons of the

Pharisees — before any man who lent himself to be the finger of God for the purpose, this evil would vanish.

One great part of the joy of Jesus' gospel is this, that he offers for the loss of self-control prompt restoration, the reception of which does not require any curious knowledge as to the cause of the ill. When man cannot manage himself, has indeed no power to begin to free himself, Jesus by his whole ministry proclaimed that it was the will of God to set him free, not by any slow process of self-help combined with the help of the divine spirit, — that may be the way of salvation for those who have the normal power of choice, — but at once and unconditionally. When a man was not his own master, Jesus, as representing God, set him free to exercise that power of choice which, as we have seen, being the only means of his salvation, is worth all else to God. So large a part of the life of Jesus consists in these acts of restoring volitional power that to neglect his teaching concerning them is an atrophy of faith.

Salvation means the direction of the whole concrete life in accordance with the law of love to God and man. Unfettered power of self-direction by no means ensures this result, else would the works of mental healing have been all that the spirit of man required from the Saviour of the world. But salvation can come only to a man with a normal power of self-direction. Hence this power was the primary gift of Jesus, as it is the primary necessity of every individual. Whenever men had will-power Jesus did not coerce it,

even to prevent its worst abuse, but when they had lost it he gave it back to them.

The joy and hope of the Christian revelation concerning the slavery of the will has long been so diminished as to be scarce recognisable; and when here and there throughout the Christian ages bursts of popular enthusiasm have occurred, in which men have cast their chains behind them and believed practically in the God who in the realm of individual personality is always ready to make all things new, they have, by the greater part of the Church, been regarded with suspicion which soon turned to disapproval. We cannot tell what would have happened to the world if at any time the mass of the Church had upheld by faith and prayer those who were bold enough to touch the garment of the risen Christ and be made whole every whit. We have no means of conceiving what a new earth would be like, for we have never experienced the power of a corporate faith in this revelation of Jesus; but to the logical and non-Christian man there lies no choice between believing simply and naturally in the powers and privileges of Christian faith as taught and exhibited in the earthly life of Jesus, and the belief that the Gospels represent only a great ethical teacher hampered by temporary and local superstition.

To-day we are met on all sides by a ghastly evil, partly moral, partly physical, to which science has attached no certain cause, no probable cure. The dictum of Tertullian, "If a man calls himself a Christian and cannot expel a demon, let him

be put to death on the spot," sounds perhaps a trifle barbarous, but to the plain common sense of an onlooker seems, on the whole, more intelligent than the attitude of the whole modern Church, claiming to worship Jesus and standing paralysed before the nameless misery caused by the half-nervous, half-moral, disabilities which sap the will-power of thousands of her children.

CHAPTER IV

MIND AND DISEASE

In spite of the enormous progress of medical science in knowledge and skill, there is, in the practical application of both to the bodies of men or animals, little exact knowledge. Even the veterinary surgeon finds that the personal or individual element in horse or dog baffles his forecast of cause and effect; what ought to cure, occasionally kills; what ought to kill, may cure. And although we may call these variations rare, yet when we contrast their recurrence with the certain results we can obtain when we work upon inanimate things, we are forced to perceive that there is in animal vitality a factor, or perhaps many factors, of which we have no knowledge.

The spread of any disease for no apparent reason than that it has taken hold on the popular fancy ought to be a subject of much more serious attention than it is. Physiology, bacteriology, have nothing to say here, nothing more, at least, than can be expressed by a shrug of the shoulders. The psychologist speaks of the force of a corporate idea in the neurotic origin of disease. Every one

concerned who has the power of reflection perceives that we are here dealing with an unknown something which leaps from one man's nervous system to another, quite as baleful in effect, and quite as terrible, as any specific bacteria. To call it "suggestion," to say that it works by unconscious mind, explains little, and gives no remedy. If we had not the safeguarding hopes aroused by quack medicines, "Christian Science," and the like, suggestion would soon prey upon the minds of many in every community, a worse monster of the invisible air than even bacteria or the demons of old.

Not long ago the world of medical science was moving on under the impression that the progress of knowledge was tending all in one direction — to show that health or ill-health in any part of the body must produce corresponding results on the brain and therefore on the mind. Mind as an origin of bodily affections was disregarded. More recently it has been admitted that, bodily harms being of two sorts, functional and organic, the former may be caused, and in some cases cured, by mental agency. Now we have a few doctors coming forward to claim a much larger power for the mental agent. Dr. A. T. Schofield's books make the drift of this school plain to the lay mind. One quotation will show that in these matters no finality is reached.

"We have seen that the powers of the unconscious mind over the body are well-nigh immeasurable; and knowing, as we now do, that our old division into functional and organic

diseases is merely the expression of our ignorance, and that all diseases, even hysterical, involve organic disturbance somewhere, we are prepared to believe that faith and other unorthodox cures, putting into operation such a powerful agent as the unconscious mind, or, if you prefer the formula, 'the forces of nature,' *are not necessarily limited to so-called functional diseases at all.*" [1]

Let us quote Dr. Paul Dubois, of the University of Berne, who appears to be a staunch materialist and determinist, and writes about educating his patients into a health-giving frame of mind, as one might speak of training the tendrils of a vine or the habits of a dog.

"I have been able, in the course of a rather long medical career, to give up all physical and drug measures. Undoubtedly this purely psychotherapeutic treatment is not easy. It takes an immense amount of time and patience, on the part of the patient especially, and as well on the part of the physician. The practitioner sometimes grows weary of this work, and might be tempted to take up the easier rôle of prescribing drugs. But when one has reflected on these subjects, when one has seen the patients recover their robust health after years of suffering, and regain their power to work, and become brave; when one has seen them acting on their environment, and transmitting their optimism to it by the force of contagion, then one takes courage and goes on with one's task, which is always to bring back patients to a healthy life from a triple point

[1] *The Forces of Mind*, pp. 164–5.

of view — the psychic, the intellectual, and the moral."[1]

But these doctors stand somewhat apart. The point where the main body of advanced medical men seem to part company with the historic Gospel is in the distinction they make between the diseases, mostly functional, which they admit it is possible to cure by mental suggestion, and those which cause organic disturbance in the body, and which are therefore reckoned as quite beyond the reach of mental influence. It is better here frankly to recognise that there is a very great and pardonable anxiety abroad, lest any person of weight should make any public utterance which might lead those suffering from a morbid growth to defer the surgical operation, which, if promptly performed, would prolong or save life. It is this anxiety which has caused, and which partly excuses, some truly curious statements made by religious leaders upon the limited efficacy of prayer for the sick. But the religious mind ought to admit that while it may be foolish for any man to disobey his doctor before he experiences the perfect cure of faith, and while in the present low state of the corporate Christian faith it may often be impossible to obtain such cure, it ought, nevertheless, to be possible to discuss calmly the serious question whether diseases ought to be classed as curable or not curable by faith.

There is a certain presumption against the validity of this distinction between diseases, in the mere fact that it has the aspect of embodying a

[1] *Les Psychoneuroses*, p. 345 of American translation.

temporary truce between the medical materialism rife everywhere a quarter of a century ago and the extreme idealism of those who opposed it. The place where two opposing schools halt for a time and try to come to terms, may be mistaken for the golden mean of truth, but it is seldom the same. In almost every controversy the side which possesses, on the whole, least truth, is always making a stand behind some temporary earthwork, admitting certain concessions, and saying, "Thus far and no further"; then after a while retreating again. Most of us remember that in the long resistance made by certain religious dogmatists to the doctrine of evolution, many such half-way stands were made which did not at all represent the mean of truth between two opposites. That medical materialism has already abandoned one class of ailments after another as admitting the mid cure, is no proof that it will be forced to a further retreat, but it affords a certain reasonable expectation that it may be so.

Again, the absolute unity of mind and body in which life, as far as we know consists, makes us suspect the finality of the idea that, while functional disorders may under the right conditions be cured by a mental process, certain organic diseases can be cured only by the surgeon's knife. Suppose some malign germ to be at its evil work. If the blood be very healthy, if it circulate freely in the part affected, it may overcome the poisonous intruders. But the composition of the blood by digestive processes, its oxidisation, and its circulation, are matters in which it is admitted that the mind or

unconscious mind, under right conditions, has large control. Consider the difference between a limb of the body as long as it remains part of the body and the same limb amputated. As long as any part of the body, however diseased, is alive it is animated by the life-mind, to whose power we are not in a position to put a final limit. Not long ago *The Lancet*, in a leading article, warned sufferers from cancer against wasting time in experimenting with new treatments — violet leaves and the like — till it was too late for the surgeon to operate with hope of success. The moral was pointed with the admission that, in certain cases of indisputable cancer, cures had come about "for some unknown reason" without treatment, and it was such unaccountable cases that lent a false value to certain drugs that might have been administered.[1] Here, in the very fortress of surgical assurance, is an admission that must cause every one who reflects to perceive that if an organic disease ever pass away without treatment, there cannot be anything illogical and extravagant in the presumption that such diseases, as well as functional ones, may be under the control of the mind.

There is another argument against this distinction, arising out of the evidence that cures of organic diseases by faith actually take place. We are told, and rightly, by medical men, that there is no scientific proof of organic diseases being cured by faith. No cures of faith, whatever the disease, can admit of scientific test. Even if no doubt can attach to the diagnosis before or after

[1] *The Lancet*, April 28, 1906.

the cure, it still always remains for the sceptic to give as the cause of the rare event some other condition that was coincident with the mental or religious effort at cure, it being impossible to eliminate all other conditions. But while there is no proof forthcoming to convince a mind which assumes that such cures are impossible, there is much evidence for the candid and intelligent in the personal character and impressions of people composing such societies as, for example, the Christian Alliance for faith-healing in New York. Its doctrines are "orthodox," of the extreme Evangelical cast; the writings it puts forward evince that wilful ignorance of many things (*e.g.*, Biblical criticism) which is usual with extremists of this class; but this does not alter the fact that its leaders and workers are sane, practical people. Their only means of cure is the prayer of faith; their only peculiar tenet, that with God all things are possible. They are certainly under the impression that diseases of every class are cured; and these impressions, taken in connection with their personal character, have evidential value. The same may be said of other such societies. They do not seem to seek notoriety for their works of healing, presumably obeying the gospel injunctions in this regard; but the present writer has reason to believe that their work will yield to painstaking investigation such evidence as is possible in psychical matters for the truth of their belief.

From the Christian point of view this matter is serious. The earliest traditions embodied in the Gospels present Jesus as curing all who came

to him, and commissioning his servants to do the like. Here there is no distinction between diseases that can and cannot be cured by God on the condition of assured faith in the applicant. If this is not part of the history of Jesus then we have no authentic history. There is much more difficulty in supposing these cures to be miraculous (in the scientific sense of the word) than in supposing them to be effected by a most benevolent energy of personal influence which persuaded faith and thus brought the will and thought and emotion of the sufferer into that degree of assurance which wrought health. Further, it would appear most incredible that Jesus should have given such a large part of his brief ministry to the curing of disease if he did not mean health, and the attainment of health by faith, to be an abiding condition of the kingdom of God on earth.

To sum up. It is more difficult to believe that while many diseases may be cured by the right mental conditions, there are others over which such mental conditions have no influence, than to believe that all diseases come under the same natural laws, however powerless we may yet be to apply these laws.

Setting aside the distinction sought to be drawn between functional and organic diseases as respectively curable and non-curable, we return to the fact that no one who has been watching the trend of medical thought can doubt that the importance of mental therapeutics is more and more clearly recognised by the vast majority of the profession.

It is almost universally acknowledged that where the patient has healthy will-power it must be called into exercise to choose healthy thoughts and exclude unhealthy suggestion; and where the will-power is feeble the most cheerful and healthy environment frequently fails entirely to prevent the patient dwelling upon the pains he has and fearing worse. We quote Dr. Schofield in a passage in which many of his fellow-doctors will heartily agree with him. It is upon the power of auto-suggestion.

"What the patient has to do is carefully and systematically to saturate his brain by suggestion with what he wishes to be or to become. This can be done by speech, by thought, by sight, and by hearing. Here are four brain-paths, all of which tend to set the unconscious mind — the *vis* — to work at the process of cure." [1]

It is worth while to pause and reflect upon these powers about which we are all learning to talk so glibly — the unconscious mind or life-mind which manages us and ours, and our occasional power and frequent powerlessness to direct it. Experience proves that by direct volition the conscious will can do something, but not much, to arrest or assist the involuntary processes of brain and body; but that by directing the attention to this or that, the conscious will can do very much to control the unconscious mind for good or evil. We must, then, attribute to the conscience an increased responsibility, not only for the actions it can directly control, but

[1] *Nerves in Disorder*, by Dr. Schofield, p. 123.

for the whole well-being and atmosphere in which it places that far subtler and stronger power, the life-mind. Devotional books have made us familiar with this idea, but only as applied to the abstraction of the soul. We frequently say it is not what a man does but what he is, that is the source of his power and influence; and what he is, we are now taught, is the result of the way in which he directs his attention to external sources of suggestion. It thus becomes evident, not only that the voluntary observance of religious acts has a more far-reaching power over him who performs them than he can be consciously aware of, but that the beliefs and sentiments of which he is aware may not express the set of his being at any time; they can only express what he desires it to be. The same is true of the outward observance of any sentiment or principle, such as happy acts, kindly acts, loyal acts, and acts of faith in man or in God. His life-mind,[1] according to the doctrine we have just quoted, will eventually become saturated with the sentiments he acts up to, even if at first he experiences almost nothing of the sentiment, and the unconscious life thus acted upon will become a force much greater than the conscious will, and will accomplish what that could not accomplish. In faith, in belief, in intention, what we suppose ourselves to be may not coincide with what we are. We may think we tacitly hold a faith which the whole set of our unconscious life-mind disregards, and it will disregard it until we put it into determined

[1] We use this term in preference to "unconscious mind."

action. On this theory we can realise, even in our present crippled and feeble condition of volition and body, that self-control would mean health, happiness, and goodness of an order which we can scarcely conceive, as we seldom meet the three together in any perfection. We may and must go on from this idea to the psychological result that would accrue from the mere multiplication of men of this sort, what the strength of their unconscious corporate life would be, for that also would become healthy, happy, and good, would carry them, and those who approached them, on in these paths with cumulative force.

It is curious to note that many faith-healers imagine that they cannot recognise the direct "finger of God" as the instrument of health unless they regard the cure as miraculous. If bodily health, individual and corporate, should accrue from the courage and joy of believing Jesus to be to the Church now what he was when on earth, such health would be as natural as the yearly harvest — for which we pray, for which we give thanks — as directly the work of the "finger of God" as the conversion of a sinner or the death of an aged saint.

CHAPTER V

FAITH AND THE DOCTORS

THERE is a large notion abroad that science and faith-healing are opposed; but, in fact, the issue between the "mind-healer" and the medical profession has no more bearing upon the salvation of the body offered by Christ than the quarrel between the Church and Galileo had upon the revolutions of the solar system. The doctrine that medicine and surgery are injurious is not any part of the gospel. Hygiene and medicine must bear to the salvation of the body the same relation that all education in right living, and the machinery of law and justice, bear to the salvation of the soul.

Thus, every Christian believes that sudden moral reformation of character is, by God's grace, possible and desirable; but he believes also that every help to virtue is at the same time necessary to the community. There is no antagonism between the two methods; nay more, they are recognised as complementary, God working in and through every agency for moral health as truly as in his more rapid work on more receptive souls.

If the most spiritually minded priests or mission preachers of our own day were to undertake the uplifting of some degraded district, they would believe and teach that God could and would make a sudden reformation possible to the most degraded man if he had the spiritual insight requisite to conversion. But, no doubt, at the same time a great part of their activity would be directed to the establishment of institutions for the prevention and more gradual cure of moral failure. The spiritual director, the schoolmaster, the gymnast, the librarian, the policeman, the judge, the master of the reformatory, the jailer, would have their place in the scheme of reformation. They would be necessary, because the kingdom of God does not come suddenly to a whole community. It spreads like leaven, grows like a plant. It requires human instruments for its establishment and culture. These agents, as far as they educate and help forward what is good, would be helpful even in the lives of those men most suddenly and most soundly converted; and in so far as they are required to cure or suppress moral disorder, they would be necessary because conversion depends upon a degree of spiritual insight which every man does not, perhaps cannot, exercise.

From the Gospels we gather that bodily welfare likewise comes in both these ways. Whether we can fit it into our theories or not, the fact remains that human nature does not, except in a few instances, avail itself of the best opportunities that offer. People often prefer practically to refuse both God's direct and indirect ways of giving

health. Man is like a household dog that for the most part prefers the neighbour's garbage tub to the most delicate morsels in the supplies of his master's loving providence. We are told that when Jesus lived on earth he healed all who came or were brought to him; but no one has ever dreamed that all the sick in Palestine came to him. We need to pause long in thought over that simple statement of St. Mark that he *could* do no mighty work in his own district; and the limitation was not in him! If we take his works of healing, of which the details are given us, we find every degree between the word spoken at a distance from the patient to some intercessor full of faith, and a somewhat elaborate process of visible means. For this one the Master's presence is enough, for another his touch, for another merely the touch of his garment. From some the burden of sins must first be removed by forgiveness, while others require the caution, "Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee." Is it not evident that even here, where so many received health suddenly, there could have been no sudden raising of the standard of national health?

Further, there is no clash between the Master's method and such methods of healing as were then in vogue. Jesus did not denounce other physicians; on the contrary, he said that whatever good was done was by God's power. The physician then and now had no reason to find fault. Can we suppose that the "many physicians" who had tried and failed to heal a poor woman, could have been so wicked as to refuse to be glad when she

obtained health by approaching the Christ? Nay, if at the beginning she could have got it in that way, would they have been so ruthless as to desire that she should suffer many things at their hands, and waste her substance, before she appealed to him? Certainly our brothers of the medical profession to-day are incapable of such cruelty. They do not, most of them, believe that the sick can obtain health by spiritual contact with Jesus Christ, but they can have no objection to the experiment, and its success must rejoice every physician worthy of the name. They may fear precious time being lost in a futile experiment; but we have no reason to suppose that the operation of faith and the healing grace of God requires time on the divine side; and for every man its reception must be by the grace of faith, which ought not to cover long periods of indecision. The cases are very few where medical aid and the exercise of faith need be even for a day in opposition. If they are, it is faith that is at fault, not science.

Every physician, however uncertain he may be in all matters of faith, is quite certain that he can only accomplish anything by co-operation with what he calls "nature" or "vitality." All that he can do is to evoke, encourage, and strengthen this vital force. This has been a commonplace of all schools of medicine since they existed. More recent, but now as clearly acknowledged, is the power of certain conscious mental tendencies to help in raising the vitality or lowering it, — a cheerful, hopeful, and serene frame of mind; an enthusiastic desire for health; a firm purpose to

regain it, — all these are now freely admitted to be the physician's best friends, and in many cases his necessary allies. If religion, by a renewal of faith in God, should bring strong reinforcements to the innate vitality of the body, strong enough to keep the body well, or to restore it without medical aid when it is diseased, or to co-operate swiftly and surely with recognised means, this would be a result that every physician would hail with delight, whether or not he agreed with the religious view of the how and why of the increased vitality. It is a conservative religious sentiment which has made objection to the exercise of faith in regard to health, never the true scientific spirit. What every medical man desires for his patient is life, more abundant life; and he knows far better than a layman the limits of his power — the diseases which he cannot cure, the disabilities which he cannot remove.

Faith-healers must be wrong in pronouncing any means that produce health of body or mind to be evil. The principle is clearly laid down by Jesus that evil can never produce good; that wherever an evil thing is cast down, the human agent, whatever his doctrine, is the instrument of the finger of God. There is really no ambiguity in the well-known passage in which our Lord rebuts the charge of Satanic power, not by the slightest counter-charge, but by laying down the principle for all time that good is of God, and of God only. Then, too, even an imperfect acquaintance with the history of religious thought in its connection with the application of a dawning

knowledge of nature to man's welfare ought to make it clear that no line can be drawn between the application of scientific truth to the preservation of health (hygiene), and its application to the restoration of health (medicine and surgery). There is no boundary-line, the two merge; if one is of God so is the other. As a good example of the alliance of science and faith in the promotion of health, we may remember that Christian saints at one time believed in the sanctity of dirt, that when one gleam of scientific light swept away from Christendom the idea that cleanliness was a sinful luxury, and when dirt also came to be regarded as a sign rather of impurity than of purity of soul, and the proverb "Cleanliness is next to godliness" became a possibility, with dirt disappeared from Christian civilisation the more hideous forms of disease. The movement was scientific; the Church assimilated it to her great gain.

We conclude that there can be no real opposition between medical science and a salutary power over the body gained by faith in divine healing.

CHAPTER VI[1]

THE WILL OF GOD

WHEN Milton, in *Samson Agonistes*, makes his hero say, speaking of physical strength —

> God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
> How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair —

he incidentally expresses a time-worn belief of the Church that physical strength is unimportant. Without regarding this as a Christian idea, we agree that the whole value of physical health is in its use. In these days, when there is a cult of health and physical development, we are familiar with people who live to preserve their health or to restore it, fidgeting about the world for climates and diets and exercises — people whose lives grow more and more insignificant, until, should they attain to the utmost physical perfection, they would have reached only a condition which they would share with almost all animals. Animal health, which has no dignity as an end for human life, has dignity and worth as an instrument of the mind, and is its necessary instrument.

[1] The substance of this and the following chapter appeared as an article in the *Hibbert Journal*, April 1906.

If Jesus was the Saviour of the world, he certainly began his salvation with the bodies of men. After having endured in his own person the pains of hardship and exhaustion, and the special pressure of temptation upon physical weakness, he began, as the Revised Version has it, publicly to cure "all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with devils, and epileptic, and palsied, and he healed them." He gave physical health, and cast out all such evil forces as were not under the control of the human will. The first manifestation of his glory, according to St. John's Gospel, was at a marriage which he blessed by his presence, and by the gift of an abundant supply of the wine typical of that era of exalted physical life which it was, as it seemed, his mission to proclaim.

The necessity which underlay the bestowal of this great gift of vitalising force for the body is explained in the Johannine Gospel when Jesus says that his works were one with the working of the Father through all time. "The intention of nature to heal," the preference of nature for health, of which science speaks, are but paraphrases for the law of God, the will of God, in the matter.

Jesus seems to have taken all the popular beliefs of his era, as far as he thought they represented truth, and striven to bless and brake them for the multitude. He took the common belief in marvellous cures, and transmuted it into

a higher doctrine of the power of man and the invariable will of God. He taught that such cures were (1) the direct action of the finger of God; (2) the natural sequence to a definite attitude in the mind of man — not the mind of the healer, but of the sufferer or those responsible for him. The condition on which man could receive in his body more of the overflowing vitality of God he freely preached, which was simply the faith appertaining to the cure.

Supposing the sort of cures Jesus worked to have been, as has been so clamorously asserted, actions on nature from beyond the region of nature, nothing would be more remarkable than that the condition he required should have been this, and this only. He did not demand any moral standard, or the forming of any moral purpose; he did not ask for any loyalty to his kingdom. The body was made whole in every case of manifest desire or need, whether or not the desire extended to and procured spiritual blessing, and without any moralising on the uses of this form of adversity. In several cases warnings were added which showed all too clearly how little was to be expected for the future of those who had been cured. Thus it can hardly be supposed by the most didactically-minded reader that any work of "spiritual" grace was wrought on the lepers who never even gave thanks. Where Jesus failed to evoke the psychic condition required, as at Nazareth, he was the first to proclaim that the law under which he worked was unalterable. But the faith which conditioned the action of God in merely curing the body seems

to have been so elementary that even in faithless Nazareth he could cure a few sick folk.

The action of Jesus in devoting so large a part of his short ministry to the healing of the body, and his readiness to heal apart from any qualification except the desire or need of the sufferer, contradict two conventional Christian ideas, — that bodily welfare is unimportant, and that bodily healing was regarded by Jesus as merely the prelude to moral reformation.

But, it will be said, surely pain is necessary and salutary because it is the consequence and punishment and cure of sin in the individual and in the race; Jesus cannot have dissociated pain and sin.

To this it may be replied that it seems impossible to justify suffering as a cure for sin when experience shows it is quite as often a cause of sin. Further, we have to reckon with the striking fact that Jesus plainly discountenanced the doctrine that suffering was the consequence of sin in the sufferer; and, in harmony with this, we have the fact, noticed in a former chapter, that suffering entailed by sin does not come to the guilty only, or to them in proportion to their guilt. But our contention here is not that sin and suffering are by Jesus dissociated, or can be dissociated, but rather that they are so closely associated as to be reciprocal parts of one great fact, and both to be warred against as offensive to God and inimical to man.

The salvation of the inner life, which we believe lasts beyond death, by union with the life

of God, is to the religious mind so much more important than the salvation of the body that we cannot believe that Jesus, who was, if nothing more, the world's supreme religious genius, would have given half his attention to the salvation of this earthly body unless he had believed it to be essential to the full salvation of the spirit. Every Christian believes in one sense that health of body is necessary to the perfection of spiritual life, because he cannot think of a future salvation without the idea of perfection in a body or the equivalent of a body. It must be evident to the open mind that there is very little in the teaching of Jesus that can even suggest that he encouraged men to hope for a future salvation except as they experience it in this world; and the best Christian thought of every age, more especially of our own day, is eager to believe that salvation of the spirit is offered to us in this life. But we are in the throes of a transitional period, and we have not yet widely realised that if some perfect vehicle is necessary in the future to perfection of the spirit, so a healthy body must be necessary now to the highest degree of spiritual health attainable in this life. We are endeavouring to perpetuate false ideals of spiritual health,—ideals consistent with bodily weakness and disease — because high spiritual attainments were certainly reached by the saints in a period when bodily strength was ignorantly supposed to be a hindrance to spiritual attainment. Our religious prejudices are still fed by the eminent devotion that we find in the memoirs of mediaeval ascetics, because we have

not realised that their spiritual life became lusty in spite of, not because of, their neglect of the body. A corporate prejudice is always the path of least resistance for the individual mind; and yet, at the door of our understanding the Christ would seem to wait, in simplicity offering a perfectly natural, because a perfectly divine, salvation. He has summoned many messengers who call to us with many voices to open and let this salvation in.

In the first place we have the voice of philosophy, emphasising the essential oneness of body and mind. Take the words of our leading English psychologist:

"To regard mind as the collateral product of its own external perceptions is simply to invert the facts. One might as well say that reflections produce their own mirror, or that houses evolve architects. We are led, in a word, to doubt that mind and matter can be dual realities, either phenomenal or ontal." And again, "Since all that we know and feel and do, all our facts and theories, all our emotions and ideals and ends, may be included in this one term — experience, it is by raising this question as to the nature of experience that, as I think, we shall see the untenability of dualism." [1]

Next let us hear what medical science has to say:

"My contention simply is that from the standpoint of general pathology all normal and morbid mental phenomena must be regarded merely as

[1] Prof. James Ward, Sc.D., *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. ii. pp. 106, 110.

the expression of the functional reaction of the organ concerned." [1]

Next we come to the opinion of a physiologist.

"A reflex has already taken place when the motor reaction of a cell is brought under the influence of an irritant. . . . The gesture by which we mechanically respond to the bow of another person is a reflex, an almost unconscious reflex when we bow abstractedly, a more complex reflex when we rapidly take in by the mind's eye the motives that prompted this act of politeness. And always and everywhere, whether it is a case of the action of the most humble organ or of the most exalted workings of our mind, it is just the same mechanism. . . . A compliment tickles our self-esteem and influences our determinations. A cutting word excites our wrath and makes our blood boil. The involuntary gesture is associated with our mental reactions. . . . Physiology must undertake the work of pursuing the study of these reactions of the organism, whether they have to do with nutrition and the ordinary reproduction of all living beings, or with the simple psychic facts that are observed in animals, or the marvellous mechanism of the human mind in its highest manifestations. . . .

"The simple idea of absolute or relative human liberty leads us to establish an essential difference between a fault of character and a mental malady. This distinction, and I cannot repeat it too often, is artificial and untenable. At what degree

[1] From paper read before the British Medical Association, 1901, by W. Ford Robertson, M.D., pp. 67, 82–3.

do indecision, irritability, impressionability, and emotional disturbances become sicknesses? Are sorrow and pessimism faults or illnesses? In the mental domain it is still more impossible to try to make this distinction. It seems only to exist when one is looking at the extremes. It seems normal to us to be sad when we lose a friend, to be discouraged in the presence of failure; but we regard anybody as diseased who commits suicide in order to escape the perplexities to which we are all subjected. We all have our periods of indecision, which often appear exaggerated to the eyes of others; but we send a patient to a physician when he passes hours in agonising perplexity without being able to decide whether he will change his shirt to-day or to-morrow. . . . Properly speaking, then, psychology is only a chapter of physiology, of biology." [1]

Or let us listen to the cry of the practical religious reformer. The Jesuit tells us that if he has the custody of a child for its first seven years, by God's help he will form its life; and he does it. Who can hold a child morally responsible for the environment of its earlier years? The revivalist cries, "Give me crowds, and music, and power of speech by which to excite their sensibilities, and God will snap the chains of habit and education that hold many individuals in the crowd, and start them on a new life from which they will not revert;" and it is done. Yet the hour and the music and the oratory are to men thus converted mere physical accidents.

[1] Dr. Paul Dubois, *Psychic Treatment of Nervous Disorders.*

Mind, independent of brain, is an assumption made because, on the whole, the functions of body and brain account for the self less adequately than does the assumption of mind. Mind, thought of apart, is hypothetical just as God is hypothetical, and we may add, just as free will is hypothetical. All these conceptions are in the region of faith. We believe in the freedom of our wills, though determinism seems to be a fact of knowledge. We believe that mind can separate from body, but have no knowledge of the abstraction called "the soul."

We may be bewildered by the different standpoints from which our modern schools are showing us this mystery, asserting the oneness of spirit and body in various connections, but we can no longer set aside their many voices. One section of them tells us that the criminal is a criminal because of the defective bodily tissue that he has inherited, and therefore it is cruelty to attribute to him any personal moral failure, or punish him as a delinquent. Another set are telling us that, because parents will certainly transmit their own sins in defective physique to their children, their moral responsibility is heightened by that knowledge and extends, not only to the necessity of a higher moral life, but to the need for the most hygienic life, and that if they refuse to act up to this responsibility they should be judged and treated as criminals. Another set are telling us that, because our every fault is the result of some morbid functioning in the brain-cells, health rather than spiritual life is the counsel of per-

fection; while another and ever-growing school is declaring that most of our diseases proceed from the morbid action of the brain, which is caused by morbid thoughts under the control of the will, and that, by calling in the aid of religion or philosophy or morals, we can so exercise healthy thoughts as to cure our bodies and keep them in health. Who shall tell us the difference between the spiritual and physical life? It would take too long to tell the innumerable aspects in which the unity of mind and matter is forcing itself upon us.

The bearing of this unity upon the religious theory of life is very close. If physical evil produces moral evil we can no longer believe that a God to whom moral evil is abhorrent is the author of our physical afflictions. Either moral evil must be within the scheme of God's special providence for the soaring soul, or else physical evil cannot be part of his providence. If we ought, in the name of all that is holy, to resign ourselves to bodily disease as his will, we ought to resign ourselves to sinfulness for the same reasons. If, on the other hand, he calls us, in his name and by his strength, to resist sin because it is loathsome to him, we must, for the same reason, resist disease. If the salvation from sin is by faith and through the energy of his supernatural life, we must, to hold him consistent, believe that he offers the same energy of supernatural life to be utilised by our faith against what is only another aspect of sin.

Nor can we, with any consistency, distinguish between sin and the bodily results of sin by the

argument that it is his will that we suffer the results because the race has sinned. Take, for example, the case of a good man in the prime of life, living well by all the laws of hygiene, morals, and religion, who finds himself suddenly attacked by some hideous organic disease that cannot be attributed to his mode of life. The religious theory is that God sends the disease in order to do a work of grace in his soul which could not otherwise be done. If the man be in a gracious condition there is no doubt that he will be very conscious of unique nearness to God in the extremity of his need. Real, vital, as this experience in itself is, it proves nothing beyond itself. These hours of unique consciousness of God's presence — what are they? Is a good man really nearer to God at one time than at another? His consciousness of God's presence is due to the intense attention that he devotes to knocking at the door of God's own place, to seeking his face, to asking for his grace. Was he incapable in health of devoting this attention? Is it necessary to believe that God requires the whirlwind of emotion and the fire of pain in which to speak, and that in the quiet monotony of health and the normal exercise of benevolent activities for the spread of the kingdom he cannot make his still small voice heard? In the meantime the sick man's benevolent activities for the world are stopped; the benevolent activities of his household are withdrawn from the world and centred upon him; the physical health of every one closely connected with him is lowered by

contact with pain and disease; the subjects of this contact are by such lowering made more liable to such disease, even if no contagious germs escape. Is the world so thoroughly saved that it can be through any will of God or his Christ that good men and women who are spending their lives for its salvation must concentrate all their energies in enduring or curing or solacing disease, in order that some vital hours of personal communion with God may be attained? Nor, because such is the present order of things, ought that mere fact to induce the Christian mind to believe that the order is of God. "Whatever is, is right" must apply to all vice if it is accepted as a principle.

How often are we confronted with the saying that it is the good and the lovely who die young, the useful and the loving who are cut off in their prime, while the useless and crabbed, the worse than useless and worse than sour, live on. This impression is, no doubt, a case of the fallacy of positive instances; but it is only an over-statement of the certain fact that death and misfortune assail and disable those who are helping in every good cause as often as those who are hindering the progress of the race. How does this bear on our faith in a God who wills and works for our moral progress? The record of every Christian mission shows how large a proportion of the workers, perhaps after long preparation, fall prematurely on the field, or are rendered useless by accidents or diseases which might occur anywhere or to men engaged in any enterprise —

misfortunes not necessarily involved in that personal conflict with evil which constitutes some degree of martyrdom, and which may be, even in failure, a moral triumph. All political and commercial records show how many are the forms of disaster that dog the steps of every noble enterprise, as well as the particular form of failure which its nobility challenges. When we reflect on the attribution of all this to the divine attention we cannot but be vividly reminded of our Lord's words, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation."

CHAPTER VII

HISTORY OF HEALTH BY FAITH

We have every evidence that the apostles believed without question that all the children of the kingdom, to whom they in their turn ministered, had a right to this least part of the great salvation, the initial blessing of bodily health; and the last verses of St. Mark's Gospel, with all other later additions to the Gospels on the same topic, prove clearly the general faith of the early Church,[1] viz. that every believer was to have health in a degree that would render him immune from all poisons, and give him the power of presence which can evoke self-government in those who have lost mental or bodily control of themselves.

[1] The fathers and historians of the first five centuries clearly testify to the power of the Church to heal by faith. From among them take only two in addition to Tertullian, already quoted.

Irenaeus, second century, as quoted by Eusebius: "Far are they, the Churches, from raising the dead in the manner the Lord and his apostles did, by prayer, yet even among the brethren frequently, in a case of necessity, when a whole church has united in much fasting and prayer, the spirit has returned to the exanimated body, and the man has been granted to the prayers of the saints." And again: "Some most certainly and truly cast out demons . . . as others heal the sick by the imposition of hands, and moreover, as we said above, even the dead

Yet we quickly discover that in many communities the blessing was not realised; as, for instance, in the Church of Corinth, where, not a lifetime after the institution of the Lord's Supper, many were weak and sickly and many died prematurely. St. Paul reproaches the Corinthians with this, and points out the cause (1 Cor. xi. 29–30). If the touch of Christ's body in the sacrament had always been accepted by faith to the maintenance of the health that the body needed to enable it to glorify him, the holiest as well as the basest must have used the temple of God more reverently, and could not have supposed austerities to be for the welfare of the soul.

For centuries before the Christian era the doctrine that sin emanated from what was material had been implied in the philosophies of India and Greece, and had pressed into the Semitic religions from both sides. It had had a large effect upon the most progressive Judaic thinkers, and early tainted the teaching of the Christian Church, which it afterward permeated. As Dr. Bruce remarks, Jesus did not teach this. "He is reported to have

have been raised and continued with us many years. . . . As the church has freely received she also freely ministers."

Eusebius, early in fourth century: "Who is he who knows not how delightful it is to us that through the name of our Saviour, coupled with prayers that are pure, we cast out every kind of demon? And thus the word of our Saviour, and the doctrine which is from him, have made us all to be greatly superior to the power which is invisible," etc. And he adds the reason why these gifts had declined in the Church in his time — namely, not that the heritage of miracle had ceased, but that the Churches were "unworthy" of them.

said to the priests and elders: 'The publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you.' The grounds of this comparative estimate are obvious. The sins of the one class had their seat and source in the flesh, leaving the inner man to a certain extent untouched; the sins of the Pharisees were vices of the spirit, sin had possessed the whole spiritual nature. . . . In the light of this judgment of Christ, and its grounds, we see how far he was from entertaining the view as to the nature and origin of sin held by the Greeks and by deists, that it has its seat in the flesh, and makes its appearance in human conduct because man is a being possessed of a material organisation which exercises a misleading, disturbing influence upon his rational nature. He rather believed that sin appears only in mitigated form when it springs out of bodily appetites and passions, and that it is seen in its true malignity when it has its origin in the soul, and reveals an evil will, a selfish heart, and a perverted conscience." [1]

Had the Church maintained the view that health was the heritage of the children of the Lord, Christendom, as far as we can see, would have been saved from the distress caused by the supposed antagonism between the laws of nature and the laws of grace. Had the children of the light of faith accepted the teaching of Jesus that all good is of God, the light which is their special inheritance would have made them love all light. They would not have stoned the prophets of scientific light that God raised up time and again,

[1] *Apologetics*, by A. B. Bruce, D.D., pp. 57–58.

even in dark ages; and the world would not have waited for modern science before it learnt that there is a distinct "intention" in nature towards health — in other words, that the divine sustaining force intends health. The source of the Church's error and lack has always been unbelief; and having, through unbelief, mislaid the gift of health, she next pointed to her own experience to prove that God had withdrawn it. But "kings give, they do not lend"; and the gift, once given, must be hers. Confidently holding to the full salvation of her Saviour, she could never have assimilated the belief that physical nature was in some peculiar way the home of the devil, and half her warfare would have been accomplished ere it was begun. Her force would have been more steadfastly directed against the real strongholds of the enemy, which to-day still stand strong.

Disregard of bodily pain had no part in the mind of Christ; but indifference to pain, even the seeking of pain to develop fortitude, were aspects of a virtue much esteemed by the heathen world. It was, indeed, the tenderness of Jesus Christ which, as much if not more than anything else, made it difficult for the heathen world to accept him as a hero; and it is the legacy of these heathen sentiments that makes his precepts seem impracticable to us to-day. Had Jesus pandered in the least degree to that insensibility to suffering which every savage and all ascetics seek after, and to the belief in force, the earthly synonym for government, he would to that degree have worshipped the prince of this world and attained worldly dominion more easily.

Where he performed God's will perfectly the Church failed, and soon depicted her Saviour as a God so austere that a feminine object of adoration was felt to be necessary. With a great and ever-increasing number of heathen converts, indifference to pain came early to be regarded as a Christian virtue, and the infliction of pain a Christian necessity: asceticism and persecution stalk hand in hand across the fields of Christendom. The same law of the power of mind over body which at the beneficent command of Christ worked health, began under different direction to produce marvels of a different sort: the choice of horrid austerities, visions, levitations, such phenomena as that of the *stigmata* — all these became manifestations of the spiritual life which we do not now consider wholesome. As they were supposed to be the will of God quite as much as were marvels of healing, which still incidentally accompanied them, it became necessary to suppose that God, who worked these miracles, aimed, not at health or at ill-health, but at marvels. Thus, when unhealthy results of religious fervour came to be classed with the normal benefits of faith, both kinds of evidence of what was called supernatural power were constantly simulated, fell into disrepute with the thoughtful, and, except as temporary and localised manifestations, gradually ceased. Although, in dusty archives, the Church has preserved theoretic belief in her power to heal the sick, she never practically admits that it is her duty to heal them.

In this general gloom God's Spirit of truth and blessing, always pressing to enter the heart

of humanity, is seen in those movements which rose to assert the claim of nature to be instinct with God and the claim of man's body to reverence. Prophets of physical science appeared who discerned unity under variety, order under confusion, truth under all that was phenomenal — conceptions ever denoting a supreme object of faith. The Church refused to identify her God with that underlying reason and power which the inspired prophets of science, dimly at first, discerned, and served with the faith of martyrs. The reason of her refusal was fear; the reason of her fear was lack of faith. She was holding on to the Source of Faith with only one hand; the other hung withered at her side. In practice she had pushed aside the actual, exquisite, marvellous temple of the Holy Ghost, the individual body of flesh; she must, pursuing this path, set aside the individual brain and mind, the light of reason. Having lost reverence for the individual body, her conception of the corporate body became artificial, including and excluding too much; and, despising the individual mind, her method of ascertaining the corporate mind became ineffectual. The faith of individualism and the faith of science joined forces throughout Christendom, and fought against the cult of the withered hand and all that want of faith which makes for bondage and a partial salvation.

While the anguish of this war was and is, we always find in secluded spots the recognition of the revelation that would have hindered this unnatural strife. A series of local communities

arose which determinedly held the belief that the health of the body was the will of Christ, and to be claimed by prayer. Examining what records there are of these in the light of those more modern sects which exhibit faith-cures for our inspection to-day, there cannot be, for the unprejudiced Christian, much doubt that wherever this part of Christian faith has been exercised, many mighty works of healing have taken place. Let us, then, note carefully that when a number of people who believed that health could be claimed as the will of God gathered together, shut up to their own society either by some separating doctrine or by persecution, faith rose to an unwavering height, and was crowned by the divine response. A shrine or relic that evoked the necessary faith has always produced the same results. As an example, take the miracles of healing at the tomb of the Jansenist Abbé Paris in the eighteenth century, said by Hume to have been as well attested as the best evidence in a learned age could make them. There is evidence that the same thing happened among the early Moravians and Quakers; and, here and there, within or without sectarian communities, healers arose who had the power of so convincing and leading other men's minds and emotions that in many cases they could produce in others the certainty which they themselves possessed. Luther himself, though like all the reformers prejudiced against Popish "miracles," did by prayer cast out demons and recover men from the point of death. If any one will examine critically, yet reverently, the

life of the faith-healing communities of to-day, he will find that the same circumstances are necessary to bring about any fair proportion of such cures as are variously called instances of "the divine healing," or "the faith-cure," or "the mind-cure." Either the subject must enter into the community and, by accepting its separating doctrines, close eyes and ears to the larger Church without, or he must be under the constant and prolonged influence of some individual who holds the conviction with enthusiasm, or he must visit some shrine, or be in a solitary place, as some missionaries and travellers are, or be isolated by disposition, circumstance, or infirmity. Yet, although there are many successes, now, as formerly, the result of what seems to be absolute faith is not always health; and more baffling still to the honest inquirer is the fact that it is not the highest type of mind or character that most frequently receives sudden or obvious accession of health.

From such a record very varying inferences are drawn, even by those who realise keenly that the Church has lost and is losing much by resisting this part of the gospel of Christ. In attempting an explanation, some have even endeavoured to classify diseases as curable or non-curable by the Almighty! Others have thought to make the acquisition of health, even in the present state of the Church, the test of spiritual obedience, and in other ways to make the available evidence prove more or less than it does.

Let us be careful neither to add to nor subtract from such records as we have. If we would draw

a right inference we must first go back to where the true faith sprang, where the Divine Man grasped God with both hands, bringing together into a unity within human ken the force which animates and sustains matter and the voice which speaks to the conscience of man.

We find that Jesus does not blame the individual for lack of faith, while he constantly reproves, upbraids, and reproaches his race, his generation, and the religious classes in the nation, for faithlessness. Only after his apostles had lived exclusively in his companionship for some time does he level the reproach at the little band; and there is but one solitary instance in which, before his death, he reproves an individual for the sin of doubt. When our Lord upbraids the Jews for lack of faith, he does it on the ground that the national movements of the time, especially the preaching of John, ought to have raised the general level of faith. The paradox of individual and corporate faith — it is only by the utmost effort of individuals that the many can rise; it is only by the rise of the many that any individual can realise the fruit of his effort — is always just below the surface of his discourse. Even while Jesus upbraids his fellow-countrymen for unbelief, he freely admits that their ears and eyes are closed and their hearts hardened by the spirit of their generation; he ceaselessly and hopefully exhorts the individual to faith or praises him for possessing it, he never blames him for want of faith; he constantly blames the collective soul for doubting, but admits that his exhortation will be useless.

Here we come on the reality of the corporate nature of religion, and knock against the limit of individual responsibility and power. In religion, the region in which the soul gains most in solitude with God, it is seen to be most dependent on the corporate soul. The individual or strongest religious purpose cannot rise far above the average level, and can outstrip by very little the nobler characters of his time. This is not a matter for argument, but a fact of history. All history shows that the inspiration of the giants of faith is conditioned by the mind of their age. That all this, which our Lord recognised, is the current thought of to-day is shown by the frequent use of such phrases as "the spirit of the age," "telepathy," "the war fever," "esprit de corps."

It has before been remarked that the idea of wonderful cures worked by those specially religious was the common belief in Palestine and the surrounding countries at the time of Christ. It was, therefore, not more difficult then for the individual to rise to the assured expectation of bodily health which the person and teaching of Jesus evoked than it is now for men to be patriotic when a popular war makes patriotism rife, or to show self-abnegation at a time when great calamity is drawing out the more unselfish virtues of the community. The case became different where a Christian man or Christian community was surrounded by a more sceptical heathen element, as, for example, in the case of St. Paul himself, who was often obliged to conduct his solitary warfare surrounded by unbelievers, or in the case of the

Church at Corinth, where "many were sick"; or later, in the case of all believers, when the Church as a whole had practically repudiated any duty with regard to the health of the body.

These considerations make it evident why modern sects that preach the healing of the body by faith find by experiment that the diseased person must be surrounded by the faithful in a community, or worked upon by a healer, or, in one way or another, isolated from the common unbelief of the mass. They also explain why higher natures that have the widest intellectual sympathy are seldom at present the subjects of notable "cures" — such will always, by their power of sympathy, be most subject to the woe of the common mind. To-day, every individual who reasonably accepts the salvation of the body is dragged back by the collective soul of Christendom; and men of the five talents, large in understanding and heart, are least able to brush aside the race of which they are part. They do not build towers upon which a few can appear to be nearer heaven; rather they put down new pavements in the city of God among men, thus raising the whole slowly. Their faith, many times more fervent than that of the bigot, produces a less visible but much greater result. When the corporate faith reaches a higher level, the gain of the whole will show in them most richly, and in them will find its culmination.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BALANCE OF NATURE

THE ethical laws of the kingdom demand that a moral miracle be worked within us. The physical powers displayed by Jesus as characteristic features of that kingdom are also beyond our natural reach, although perhaps not so far beyond as its moral requirements. We cannot doubt that Jesus meant these two sorts of heavenly power — the power of obedience to the law of love, and the power of working the physical marvels of faith — to be associated as a double revelation of God's will for men, and to be brought into clear contrast with human powerlessness. All that he preached revealed man's moral imperfection in the strong sunlight of God, as in spring sunshine an old coat shows stains and rents and threadbare patches that we had not suspected in the gloom of winter; all that he did brought out man's powerlessness to cope with the physical nature to which he was bound.

The vision of physical power in the healing of body and mind and in control over the things of earth, was needed to enable the first disciples to

trust to that invisible moral force which could so change man's moral nature that the impossible good should become possible. The good news which Jesus set forth was that God was willing and able to work with man and in man to produce, not only pure unhampered moral activity, but also superior physical power to be its support and maintain the true balance of human nature. If physical power does not grow with the growth of the spiritual nature, ill must result, and as a plain matter of fact it does result. There is a truth embedded in the contention of the materialistic medical school that religion is detrimental to health. It is not only in religious manias of various sorts that it is illustrated. Is it not true that the sanest family, if possessed by the true religious enthusiasm, does not maintain itself in physical vigour or increase in successive generations, but rather dwindles in numbers and in force? We see this phenomenon around us, and when we hear the more spiritually-minded medical school recommend religion as an aid to a healthy life we are not surprised that they limit their recommendation to religion of a moderate sort and degree. They warn us against any religious originality or depth of feeling or mystic vision. We are bound to admit that the facts of our present physical life bear out the warning.

Yet Professor Seeley's dictum, "No heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic," [1] stands as a most noble expression of the truth that to practise a nice

[1] *Ecce Homo*, chap. i.

moderation in religion is to be something much lower than irreligious. The excitement of the religious crowd gives insight into the things of God, gives the faith that accepts God's gift of moral and physical health; ecstasy and agony in private prayer have their uses in the most practical life of religious benevolence; from their secret is learnt the art of blessing the world openly. What we need is, not to guard against religious intensity, but to seek bodily reinforcement. If it were true that either hunger and thirst for God or bodily health and social well-being must be sacrificed, we would defy the doctors and cast away physical welfare without a sigh. If such is the choice the ascetic is right. But such was not the choice that Jesus offered. He came to unite the forces which had been set at variance, to restore the balance of human nature. It is this better balance of which we now feel the need so sorely. We want health and strength, more practical friendliness with the laws of nature, and more strenuous use of them for the welfare of the world. With the energies of physical regeneration working in him and through him, man may exercise to the full all his forces of prayer, in the strengthening of which lies the only hope of individual and racial salvation.

A Church which for insanity and hysteria, disease and infirmity, can offer none but rare and occasional remedy, which goes further and teaches that these are God's will for the world, is unfit to represent the Apostles or early Fathers, and certainly does not represent the Christ. It cannot

be honest, it cannot be pleasing to God, to laud Jesus Christ as divine and at the same time teach that God's will is to be descried and accepted in those things which Jesus taught were the work of the Evil One and to be abolished by Christian faith. It matters nothing here whether in speaking of the kingdom of Satan his words were parabolic or had the meaning they bear on their face; he certainly meant that all the ills that flesh is heir to were against the will of God.

Let the Church seek for truth in the right way and she will find the meaning of this parable, if parable it is. When she accepts the authority of Jesus and does his work, she will by degrees know all the truth she needs regarding this terrible fact of disease: she will never know it before. Jesus pointed to the prayer of faith. How many hours, by what multitudes of people, are spent each week in Christendom, wailing out complaints to God and repeating cries for his mercy in temporal things, as if his lack of mercy was the cause of all our privations! How arrogant is the assumption, how unfaithful, how sad! When the Church puts a stop to this insult to the divine nature, and spends the same time in expressing her humble, joyful trust that the power of Jesus will be made operative in his kingdom, then, and not till then, will she have taken his way.

The imitation of Jesus includes the healing of the sick, the casting out of devils, the feeding of the poor with enough and to spare, the turning of the common water of the common life into the wine of love. This imitation is obligatory,

and requires from first to last something much more than imitation. It requires a will divine in its strength — as much stronger than that which we have by nature as the will of Jesus was stronger than ours, God's will within a human will, strong enough to embrace the pain of the world and vanquish death and all its powers, a resignation of human fear and timidity to God's will which works life, and more abundant life, for all. It is not by reciting the creeds of the past and girding at those who reject them, and certainly not by rejecting them as the result of some transient position of the schools, that the Church can ever teach the world to believe. She must so rejoice in God her Saviour as to communicate his health, physical and moral, to the sick and sinful, until they shall be compelled by experience to rise up and call her blessed.

The result of much eclectic Christianity, which, although it fights for the doctrine of the Incarnation, chooses out of the revelation of Christ those points of teaching and practice by which it will abide, has been a fashion of taking from the story all that is not consistent with a modern materialism. This has formed a religion perfectly comprehensible, but on all sides we see the children of those who hold it seeking food for faith in the large assumptions of a dogmatic pessimism or in the more cheerful folly of preaching that there is nothing real in sin or sorrow. Results so unexpected ought surely to make it clear that we are quite incapable of knowing what effect any doctrine will have upon the nature within us that

we so little understand, ought surely to make us humble enough to accept the revelation of the Incarnation in its entirety, if we accept it at all.

If health of body and volitional power is the heritage of Christendom, it is waiting to be realised by a corporate faith. If there is a Divine abhorrence of disease and all forms of nervous tyrannies and mental aberrations, all such suffering is due, not to necessity, but to the lack of faith in the Church at large. Many of the noblest children of the kingdom are to-day reasonably convinced that the procession of the Spirit of God manwards involves health of body and power of will, and yet cannot appropriate the health because of the faithlessness of the many. Here, then, is now the first necessity of the higher life, the individual and corporate faith which brings the significant and sacred experience of increased bodily power, a power that will make all spiritual verities more real.

The only basis for such a faith is the acknowledged will of God. We cannot hold it and question whether it is God's will to cure one man or another. No shadow cast upon the world would be so terrible as that which would be cast by variableness or turning about of the will which is the source of all good and perfect gifts. There have been times and places in which it was thought to be a matter for the special providence of God whether this or that man might be godly or not, ought to be clean or not: we now believe boldly that God's will is goodness, is cleanliness, for all. Faith in divine healing as revealed in the Lord

Jesus cannot for any length of time rest on any narrower foundation than this. Until we class together those awful realities, sin, disease, and dirt, and realise that ill-health of any sort bears to a man's body the same relation that dirt bears to his house or sin to his soul, faith in the healing touch of Christ will still tend to be associated with inadequate theologies, to be local and ephemeral, evinced by one section of Christians or another, but rejected by the Church at large.

CHAPTER IX

THE NATURE MARVELS

WHILE belief in the marvellous cures which Jesus worked upon the bodies and minds of men has become comparatively easy since we have gained evidence that such cures, although still comparatively rare, are not out of the course of nature, those of his works classed as "nature-miracles" are still quite inexplicable to us.

When the learning of men is applied to documents written by men and facts of human history, there comes a point in historic and literary criticism when all that need be known in order to form a sound judgment is known. That the Book of Daniel is not history; that the writers of the New Testament made mistakes in their interpretation of the Old Testament, are statements which can be proved by ample evidence. On the other hand, in considering those Christian marvels which appear to contradict the laws of nature we must not seek an assurance inconsistent with the fact that nature is so imperfectly known to us that we can never be sure she has not some fresh surprise in store.

Some of the most impossible of them form part of the history of Jesus after the most searching literary tests have been applied to the record. They stand as an abiding witness that we are only beginning to understand what he gave us to learn, that the full meaning of his earthly ministry, as it relates to the duties and privileges of the kingdom on earth, is for future generations — just as the chiefest gains of science, the higher social life, and the fruition of all our progress, is for future generations. Yet there is something to be learnt from them now.

Having seen that two out of the three classes of our Lord's marvels may well be conceived as within the province of nature, we have a strong presumption, in turning to the nature-miracles, that we shall find the same true of them.

In the first place, it is certain that the Gospels lay no claim to record any miracle in the modern sense — by which term we mean, any action of God which, even if the same earthly conditions were present, need not occur again. At the beginning of the Christian era men had not tried to draw a dividing line between the possible and impossible in nature. Cataclysms which belong strictly to the domain of nature, such as thunderbolts, earthquakes, and other prodigies, were called marvels, in common with minor things which appeared to contradict natural order. The wonderful works which Jesus did were never catalogued as supernatural by the mind of the time, because nature herself was looked upon as the mother of marvels. God and nature had never been dissociated: what

God did nature did; what nature did God did; or if the devil was supposed to be the agent, there was no dissociation of his works from those of nature, however extraordinary his actions might be. When science had her first beginnings she was bound to attempt to draw a line between the possible and impossible; but in so doing she scarcely took time to classify the Gospel marvels, until a frightened and self-defensive Church took upon her unbidden a quarrel with the knowledge of nature that comes through science, and insisted on claiming them as miracles in the scientific sense.

Secondly, if the signs we are discussing were 'miraculous,' we are bound to admit that they fall far short of what men might naturally expect, and had been taught to expect, of the unconditioned action of divine power. They did not realise the conception which man in the ancient world had, which man still popularly has, of power and glory. The psalms, the prophetic writings of Israel, are full of descriptions of more glorious acts of God's power; and in the poetry of polytheistic religions works of greater splendour are attributed to their deities when they would manifest their presence to men. The pillar of fire and cloud which went before Israel in the wilderness; the thunders of Jove; the flaming arrows of Apollo, and the earthquakes of Poseidon, "shaker of the sea and land" — all these suggest divine power by their magnificence. Jewish expectation in the time of Christ was moulded by such passages in prophetic poetry as these: — "The child shall die

an hundred years old." "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion shall eat straw like the bullock. They shall not hurt nor destroy." "The Lord will come with fire and with his chariots, like a whirlwind." "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward." Or they had God's power suggested by figures drawn from earthly power and victory, such as, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle . . . Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations." Or they had the mysteries of the unseen requisitioned in all those abnormal psychic phenomena described by the prophet Joel and joyfully claimed by St. Peter as fulfilled in the days of Pentecost.

We are familiar with the idea that the Jews expected the Messiah to be an earthly king with a temporal kingdom and were disappointed; but we do not sufficiently dwell on the fact that, whatever may have been the expectations of glory raised by the figures in which the prophets foretold outward manifestations of God's spiritual power, they were no more realised in the marvels of Jesus than was the expectation of temporal power realised in the kingdom he established. We all admit that there was an obvious reason why Jesus did not establish an empire of this world: if our Lord had had all the kingdoms of the world given to him by some power external to those kingdoms, either God or devil, he would, without the long process of natural conversion, have had no hold

upon them, unless that precious requisite of salvation, their power of choice, had been taken from them. Further, we admit that to perform miracles which coerced man's reason would have been to use a force as futile as that of armies which could but coerce his outward acts of worship. But although the best Christian thought disclaims the idea that the Gospel miracles were designed to coerce man's reason, we have to face the fact that almost all notable Christian apologists have claimed that they are miracles in the sense of being effects for which no cause can be assigned except the unconditioned fiat of the Almighty; and it is further claimed that miracles in this sense are the only proper attendants of the stupendous fact of the Incarnation — necessary signs of divine glory and power when God descended to dwell among men. The nature-miracles are the last stronghold of those who maintain this view, which must now be briefly considered. Against it an important difficulty is to be urged.

If, as our apologists have claimed, the miracles wrought by Jesus were not conditioned by means, why did they fall so far short of what they might have been when all that was required by the psychic law, "My kingdom is not of this world," was that they should not coerce man's reason? We seem compelled to ask why, if ten lepers could be healed at a word, all the lepers in Palestine were not quietly healed. If three disciples might see the transfigured Christ, why might not that vision have been vouchsafed to the imprisoned Baptist, or the perplexed mother, or

the doubting Thomas? If wine could be made to flow freely at one wedding-feast, why not at a multitude of feasts? If a weary crowd could be fed upon a mountain side, why not the poor of the cities, left during those three years in their habitual condition of disease and semi-starvation? Such benevolences as these might have persuaded without compulsion.

There are only two possible answers to the question, why the marvellous works of Jesus fell so far short of what every one must expect of the Manifestation of divine power. One — that there was indeed here nothing but a holy man about whose history grew a miraculous legend — is quite inadequate; for had these marvels been legendary, they would have been many times more glorious, as well as more fantastic and paltry. The second answer appears to be the only one that satisfies reason; it is that they were as strictly conditioned by the natural sequences of cause and effect as any action of our own, the difference being that they were conditioned by sequences of which we have only the slightest knowledge. If the marvels wrought by Jesus were strictly the result of natural causes, psychical or physical, if he could only do what he did by taking the utmost advantage of the psychic and physical means that the strength of his personality put within his control, we can well understand why those works were so limited in scope. Thus, in the strict limitation of the range and outward glory of the wonders worked by Jesus we have another strong presumption that they were subject to conditions.

Have we, then, in the works of Jesus nothing unique, nothing that adequately testifies to a Presence on earth that compels the adoration of the pure in heart, while it defies estimation by any of the human standards by which men had before him been obliged to measure the divine?

We compare our Lord's miracles with the natural expectation concerning phenomena that would show forth divine glory, and they appear poor and meagre. We compare them, again, with the marvels that have their birth in local fancies and their record in religious fiction, and we find in them a dignity that in this comparison is majestic, a tender utility and grave economy which mark them as belonging to a higher and purer level of thought. When we make a third comparison, and set our Lord's power as displayed in the nature-miracles beside human power with which we are familiar, we are confounded by the contrast of man's feebleness in the midst of natural forces.

Compare the genius of the man Napoleon. Perhaps no other man has shown such extraordinary power in organising rough crowds into armies, in compelling the wealth and the ingenuity of the world for the sustenance and equipment of those armies. What was it that foiled him in the zenith of his power? A desert place and a hungry multitude! In our late war in South Africa the same direful circumstances were repeated many a time on a smaller scale; they come home to us because the sufferers were those of our own household. Once, upon the veldt, a little company,

some hundreds of men, after having ridden hard since sunrise in pursuit of an elusive enemy, came at night to the camping place where they were to receive the first meal of the day. Some dry food there was — not enough to go round; but the scarcity was nothing compared with the lack of water. A few gallons were made into dirty black tea and served out to the first comers, and for the rest there was nothing but burning thirst and hunger for another night and day. More than one of those strong men turned away sobbing with disappointment when they found they could not obtain a mouthful of tea. This is what the wealth of England and modern military science could accomplish! Our compassion becomes almost fever within us as we think of the shame and pain of such suffering. We turn to an incident in the life of Jesus for which there is as good historical evidence as for any other, and watch with what incomparable serenity he feeds to fulness a weary multitude in a desert place. The beautiful order of that feast, the lavish abundance, the sober thrift, give it a character which even now refreshes our minds and bodies when we think of it. Among all that mixed crowd which sat upon the grassy slope in expectant companies none lacked the appetite of health; it was the health-giver who gave them food. How powerless is the modern physician to heal more than a few of those who come to him; Jesus had healed all who came — all![1]

It is needless to repeat that the means Jesus

[1] St. Luke ix. 11–12; St. Matt. xiv. 14–15.

employed in the nature-miracles are beyond our knowledge or imagination, and, unlike the miracles of healing, they are more marvellous to-day to us, to whom the greater works of science are familiar, than they were to the simple peasantry before whom they took place. Are they incredible? Every candid mind, even the most sceptical, must reply that they are not incredible, although they are as yet inexplicable. Nothing is incredible, even though inexplicable, as long as our knowledge about it is incomplete enough to leave room for the discovery of its place in some sequence of cause and effect now unknown. As an illustration of a marvel to be credited only because we believe it may be explicable we quote an article by M. Gustave le Bon on the energy generated by the activity of radium: —

"Parmi les assertions qui ont été formulées dans la discussion sur le radium auquel il a été fait allusion se trouve la suivante énoncée par M. Soddy; 'L'émission de l'énergie du radium reste un mystère.'

"Ce mystère est évident avec les idées anciennes, mais si on admet la théorie de l'énergie intra-atomique que je défends depuis si longtemps, l'explication du mystère est en vérité très simple. Tous les corps, le radium comme les autres, représentent un immense réservoir d'énergie concentrée sous un faible volume à l'époque de leur formation. Seule cette énergie peut expliquer la vitesse d'émission des particules radio-actives.

"Et si on demande comment une quantité très grande d'énergie peut être condensée sous un si

faible volume, on répondra que l'explication est très simple encore. Il suffit d'admettre que les éléments des atomes sont animés d'un mouvement de rotation ayant la rapidité de l'émission des rayons cathodiques, c'est-à-dire, une vitesse moyenne égale au tiers de celle de la lumière. J'ai montré ailleurs qu'on pourrait imaginer une petite machine pouvant être enfermée dans le chaton d'une bague, et composée uniquement d'une sphère de la grosseur d'une tête d'épingle tournant sur elle-même dans le vide avec la vitesse indiquée plus haut. Par le seul fait de sa rotation, son énergie cinétique serait de 203,873 millions de kilogrammètres, soit le travail fourniraient en une heure 1510 locomotives d'une puissance moyenne de 500 chevaux." [1]

While science is able in these last days to soberly suggest potentialities in 'dead matter' which stagger our powers of comprehension and belief, which of us is prepared to affirm of any of the marvels of Jesus that in regard to them there is no room left for the discovery of natural powers and sequences which may account for them — that, in fact, we know all there is to know about them? It may be that future generations will find the nature-miracles so far explicable as this generation begins to find the miracles of healing. Yet in these miracles of Jesus, as they stand before us to-day, there is a quality of exquisite friendliness with nature, human and physical, which attracts us as much as their inexplicable mystery repels. We are enlightened by them, not as by the clear

[1] *The Athenæum*, Nov. 17, 1906.

shining of a heavenly light, but as by the glare of sunshine breaking through a mist — a glare which dazzles while it leaves us bewildered in the cloud. At present all we can do with these nature-miracles is to concern ourselves with what is of supreme importance to us — the part they take in the revelation Jesus gave through all his signs of God's will for man, and the human conditions in which that will can work.

CHAPTER X

THE CONDITIONS OF PHYSICAL POWER

THERE is nothing in the gospel narrative that seems to set the ideal of the kingdom more apart from the natural life, nothing that clashes more rudely with the common sense of the world, than the absolute promises Jesus gave that God would provide for the personal needs, material as well as spiritual, of the true child of the kingdom; and the nature-miracles were the most emphatic part of that body of teaching by which Jesus enforced the duty of a disinterested life. When we examine the conditions common to them all, we may find that they also teach that God's providence in these matters can only operate fully when the disinterested life of faith becomes corporate.

The common characteristic of these nature-miracles is that they were accomplished only in those companies, small or great, which were for the time presumably of one heart and way of thought, strongly moved by some common innocent desire. In the case of the desert feast a multitude who, disregarding all other calls, had hung for days upon the words of Jesus, had presumably been

welded for the time into a psychic unit. Such as were not enthralled by his voice must have turned away before. We are told that love for his teaching had drawn them on until bodily hunger made the danger of fainting imminent. From every heart, as from one heart, would arise unspoken blessings on him for the joy of his teaching, and an unconscious cry for bread. Then came the lavish multiplication of bread and fish. We must be thankful that we are told clearly about the multiplication of those few small fishes. The detail for most minds excludes those transcendental explanations which usually belittle what they try to glorify. Here, in the solitude of the hills, as the thoughts of hundreds of men bless God for religious enlightenment, their bodies cry out for common food, and the Christ, standing in the midst, produces it abundantly, by means to us invisible, inexplicable, and experimentally incredible.

Take as another example the wedding-feast. We know that it was the custom to shut the door when the bidden guests had entered. Here, then, was another company apart for the time, their hearts filled with the simple emotions which the occasion called forth. "Joy is the grace we sing to God," and there is no occasion that calls forth the joy of brotherhood more surely than such a festival. Especially in simple peasant life is the wedding-feast an hour of heightened emotion and enjoyment. Not merely the desire of quenching thirst or satisfying the pleasures of the palate would make such a company feel solicitous when there was a troubled halt among those that served; the

pain of the host, of the bridegroom and the friend of the bridegroom, would come before their minds. Poverty never really weeps till it is checked in an act of generosity, never really suffers shame except when ashamed to be unable to give. In the midst of the common desire evoked by sympathy with a generous poverty, the Christ turned water into wine.

Again, let us consider the stilling of the storm, or that scene upon the sea in the fourth watch of the night when Jesus came to the little loyal band of disciples toiling in rowing, distressed by the waves and a contrary wind. Here again was the common isolation, and one strong, simple desire for help against the elements; the means by which he commanded the elements, or the means of his coming over the sea, are beyond our ken. We have no reason to suppose that had there been no isolation of storm and night, had the lake been studded with boats of fishermen who had no common interest, no conscious desire for his help or his presence, he could have done these things; just as we have no reason to suppose that he could have given wine to the thirsty poor of the indiscriminate streets, or bread to any promiscuous crowd of beggars, or could, for a sign to the carping and faithless theologians who asked for one, have cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple without suffering bodily harm. These feats may have been possible to his earthly conditions, but there is much in the Gospel record against the presumption.

In one case, when he brought back the dead to

life, he shut out from the room all except five souls, who must have been shaken with grief or intense sympathy; in another he performed the same marvel in the midst of "much people of the city" who, according to the narrative, had come out with the mother, moved, as the emphasis on the size of the procession suggests, by the more than common pathos of her bereavement. In the raising of Lazarus, again, it is specially recorded that Jesus waited upon the road until both sisters, and all those who were weeping with them, came out to him. These could have been no hired mourners, for, we are told, their grief so moved our Lord that he wept with them. Now, it was not until this multitude went with him to the tomb and stood around him, that he called Lazarus forth. We are told that some of the mourners did not believe on Jesus, although many of them did; but it would appear from the narrative that, as in the other cases, it was not a common belief in him, but absorption in some emotion which they had in common with him, that made his acts possible; in this case there seems no doubt that the mourning multitude about him were united in a genuine grief — the man Lazarus was evidently bound to a large number of his neighbours by ties of unusual affection. These circumstances were not enough without the faith Jesus exercised in the invariable procession of power from God, but they seem to have been required.

If we turn to our Lord's promises concerning the marvels that God will do through men in answer to prayer, we find that they postulate the

same conditions, and his words probably have more strict application to the conditions required for his own miracles than we have been accustomed to perceive. The individual is to isolate himself for the hour, or to be gathered with those who seek the same end by the same faith; the eye is to be single, for a double aim is fatal; the thoughts are not to be taken up with thrifty foresight, nor do the bodily needs even require expression, or more than the merest expression, for the mere need goes to God's heart as a prayer; the conscious aim of him who prays is to be the "kingdom," *i.e.*, the corporate well-being and well-doing. Above all, in prayer, if it is to be true prayer, there must be no sense of separation from other men; if there is so much as a critical judgment, let alone a wrong, separating brother from brother, neighbour from neighbour, the breach of unity is first to be healed: no offence is to be given to, or taken from, the world, so that even the external antagonism of all evil may be minimised in fact and obliterated in thought. This is the epitome of the requirements demanded in the synoptic Gospels of him who would seek from God the more abundant life of the kingdom whose first law and chief traffic is prayer. In St. John's Gospel the two conditions of prayer chiefly insisted on are, friendship with and invocation of the risen Christ, and love for and communion with men, both essential to a triumphant result. Here, as always, we have the idea of a psychic coalition, produced by common intense desire and the inspiration of the spirit of the Master. That inspiration creates an assured

expectation that the means will accomplish the end because in harmony with the desire of God to give what is asked. This assurance of the marvellous result is put forth as sufficient motive to make obedience to the law of love possible.

To sum up. If the marvels of Jesus required as their condition a coalition of hearts attuned in some sort with the heart of God in that they blessed what he blessed, and mourned what excited his sorrow, and were in no way perturbed by sense of earthly or spiritual antagonism; if we also allow that the precepts and promises of the gospel point to some divine necessity for the same human conditions in order that men of any age may duly experience God's inspiration and providence, we are faced with this conclusion at least, that if we decide apart from these considerations how far it may, or may not, be wise or possible to obey the laws laid down for the members of this corporate commonwealth, we cannot blame the system of Jesus if our Christianity appears to fail. If one man alone for an hour in his closet has by prayer more strength to help God to bless the world than the same man in an unfriendly crowd; if in his closet he has strength that is of use to God only in so far as he is at ease in every relationship and in every respect except the need of the hour; if his strength, even in solitude, is multiplied by the consciousness of being upborne by the mind of others; if two or three men assembled in such communion of purpose can intensify the power of each to draw on the divine help in earthly things; if by the segregation of such smaller associations of minds in a more

widespread unity of spirit and aim whose reality and power does not depend on outward and visible connection, though it may be expressed and emphasised by it, God can actually do for earth what he does for heaven, — if all this be indeed true, then the unreserved and universal practice of the law of love is not only obligatory, — the exclusive obligation, — but as the obligation is more recognised will become increasingly possible.

Having seen that even Jesus appeared to require a certain psychic atmosphere in order to help the needy by his own marvellous hold upon the eternal attitude of giving in God, and that this atmosphere appears to be such that it would be created in the Church if the doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount were looked upon as practical, let us again consider why it is that we have believed these precepts unpractical. We shall find ourselves in the never-failing circle of reciprocal cause and effect: we do not receive because we have not believed; we cannot believe because we have no experience of receiving. We suppose the commands of Jesus to be beyond our obedience because we think his gifts beyond our reach. There must be faith in God's will to provide for man's earthly needs in order to make it possible for prudent men to be disinterested. It is right that a man should count the cost and consider if he is able to meet the enemy; and it is the revelation of God's will which Jesus gives in his marvellous works which shows that we have enough money to build the tower, that we have sufficient strength to meet the enemy. The religion that

would save the world must solve the great practical question, how to develop the resources of humanity to the utmost without those hatreds between man and man, that desire for material gain, which in the struggle of evolution have been chief factors of human development. Jesus recognised the command against covetousness as the keystone without which the moral arch must fall; he also saw that there was a higher law, working even on earth, accord with which made it possible to dispense with covetousness. In the old Eden story the curse upon man is not that he must work, — Adam dressed and kept the fields of paradise, — but that he must exhaust his powers in working for his own living. Jesus offered salvation from this curse. "Earthly things shall be given you" is the promise that illuminates all his commands to labour for the meat that endureth.

We need very seriously to consider what this doctrine of Jesus does actually mean in practical life. Are we to consider it as an exaggerated figure standing for a meagre reality, the offer of only the uncertain alms of such good luck as all may experience? Or is it a material figure of spiritual help only by which the common circumstances of life may be bent to the Christian's purpose? Does it, in fact, mean only what would be consonant with any reasonable forecast of the future which we could base on our experience of the past? Or does it point to a far better state of things than we can foresee — a state in which a Church truly meek will inherit the earth, and a Church really poor in spirit will establish thereon a heavenly civilisation?

If we think the latter view more worthy of the Christian faith, are we to expect the established processes of nature to be violated that an unnatural end may be accomplished? or is it more reasonable to assume that the unity of nature and the common sense of man may prove to be in harmony with an order of things even yet a little beyond our prevision? The question really resolves itself into this, Is it evidence of a sound mind to repeat the Christian creeds and believe that Jesus, although "very God of very God," spoke at times as an unpractical visionary; that he who said, "Let your communication be yea and nay, for whatsoever is more than these is of the evil," launched into the world wild promises which cannot in the nature of things be fulfilled? Or is it more reasonable to suppose that he whom we worship may have had more common sense than we have yet acquired? He said, "Resist not evil. Give to him that asketh. If men take by force give them more than they take. Love those who ill-use you. Thus and thus only shall ye become the children of the highest. Take no thought for the needs of your bodily life. God provides. Make the interests of the kingdom your supreme end. Thus and thus only shall you attain to communion with God."

The Christianity of Christ and that of Christendom are in these respects divergent. The sword and the muckrake are our earthly means of existence. The Church has never laid down either, nor insisted on universal friendship as the only mode of Christian life. We continue to

wield the sword because the command to love universally appears to us foolish. We solemnly give this command verbal deference; we repudiate it in the name of patriotism, in the name of principle, religious and political, in the name of common sense, in the name of the Church, and even in the name of Christ. Nor has the Church commended abstinence from the acquisitive temper; she has contented herself with licensing it. She has cried that a man does well if, for his nation, his church, his order, his family, he covet earnestly material gain; and to this proclamation only a few conditions concerning the laws of property and the giving of alms are subjoined. The Church is confident in contradicting her Lord because she has never caught a glimpse of that inner harmony between faith and nature which works to save the disinterested man from a pauper's grave. She has never held up the birds and the flowers as examples for the practical, everyday life; she has diligently commended the principle of storehouses and barns, and the practice of pulling them down and building greater.

The reason of all this is that, in defiance of the gospel, the Church has never conceived of God as commonly moving in man's material affairs except as the cause of inexplicable disaster or merited punishment. "Thy will be done" has been a wail, instead of a shout of joyful expectation. God has deserved better of us in nature, and a thousand times better in the revelation of Christ; and yet our saddest hymns, our most melancholy moods, have for their refrain the sentiment, "God's

will be done"; and we regard "resignation" to woe as the highest attainment of the soul before God. This is true of the Church in the land of Luther, the nation of Knox, the city of Calvin, the continent of the Pilgrim Fathers, as it is in those regions to which the Greek, Roman, or Anglican Churches desire to give exclusive light. In none of these branches of the Church does the acceptance of God's will suggest any temporal advantage; the sentiment that "the visitation of God" is direful is writ large, not only in the liturgies, but in the legal forms, of Christendom. Although the faith of Jesus Christ in the laws that govern the higher social and civil life has surely found some response in every saintly heart, the expression of such faith is vague and unpractical compared with the large body of instruction which insists that it is only after every decent form of money-grubbing has been resorted to that the Christian may carelessly throw himself on God's mercy for food and raiment; and that, while we thank God for material goods, we are convinced that they come from him in exact return for so much toil and cleverness expended in their acquisition and for the exercise of that thrift which acts as a wholesome moderator of compassion. Thus the divided aim which Jesus considered fatal to spiritual life is with us the first necessity of Christian respectability, because none of the works which he performed, none of the promises which he gave to save us from it, have obtained credence.

Failing completely, as we do, to see how the

law of love and of carelessness can be made practical, we consistently laud those who give the greater emphasis of life's energy to the skilful handling of the sword and the muckrake, if only they also give some imaginative attention to the angelic crown. Indeed, the muckrake and the beggar's wallet are our emblems of civic and religious duty; to use the one is the common virtue, to carry the other is the counsel of perfection. In other words, a man must either make more money than he needs, or, giving himself to public or religious service, take their surplus from those who make it. We insist upon taking thought for the morrow because we do not believe that God has any resources that we have left untried. We are sure that the purpose of personal gain is needed to develop character and enterprise; we are sure, not only that "he that careth not for his own is worse than an infidel," but that no degree of affiance in God can make the beatitudes true in commercial or military or national affairs. The aphorisms of Christ only apply, we are convinced, to the hidden and mysterious life of the spirit which is to be lived apart in the soul. Should this inner life wax so strong as to burst forth into practice, then error, confusion, the pauperism of the individual, and the fall of empire, would result. We see all too clearly that if the Jewish state of the Christian era had loyally accepted Jesus as its ruler, he could not possibly have administered its foreign policy according to his altruistic principles unless he had also been willing to make the stones bread

and to call for "more than twelve legions of angels" for national defence. In domestic affairs we are all assured that no adequate meal would have been spread for Jesus and his disciples if Martha, like Mary, had chosen the better part; while there is nothing more self-evident to the students of social order than that if the young ruler had distributed his property among the poor he would have done more harm than good.

These reasonable beliefs underlie the whole civilisation of Christendom. Their influence is perhaps most clearly exemplified in the latest developments, commercial and political, of our youngest nations, where unbridled covetousness in the plutocracy and violence and tyranny in trade organisations are reaching their culmination. Yet these are only the natural flower of roots laid deep in the earlier ages when the most respected saints urged the Church on to temporal power, and soldiers set out uncondemned to advance the dominion of the Cross by slaying the Saracen or the Christian heretic. These extreme examples of the attempt to combine the principles of the world with life in the kingdom differ from others only in degree; the energy of Christian life is yielded to fighting and getting and holding for one purpose or another. Our Lord, who condemned the standards of Jewish religion while teaching that from its ideal the salvation of the world must come, must condemn the militant and selfish standards of Christendom, even though it is still the custodian of his salvation.

We thus return perforce to the point with

which this book began — that the church or the individual is not to blame because it or he cannot see how a kingdom with Jesus for its king, and his principles as its laws, could exist upon earth. It is not our part to see, but to believe and to do; and to those who are unwilling to venture this, Jesus holds out no other hope of illumination. We must still hold in mind — what examination of the Gospels makes clear — that every new venture of individual faith in the Christ-life will end in some apparent failure or martyrdom till the corporate faith of the community makes the higher success possible.

BOOK IV

HIS WAYS AND OUR WAYS

CHAPTER I

FASTING AND TEMPTATION

EVERYWHERE in the records of the nations we find historic proof of the widespread hope in a time when wrong will cease, when the mad will be sane, disease will be abolished, and peace and plenty will reign everywhere on earth. The gifts of righteousness — amity, prosperity, health, and self-control — are the simplest tests of divine good-will. The most prolonged and earnest reasoning of the religious schools, which have taught that God desires to wean men from the world rather than to give earthly with spiritual blessing, can hardly reason away the expectation; and the belief that such earthly gifts must accompany divine power springs unbidden in the heart of the simple. The prayer for a deliverer who should bring about such conditions of life seems to have been the prayer of the men of every nation as soon as they were able to give their deepest hope any corporate expression. The effort to express this prayer is to be found in the magical rites of primitive religions. It is painted in the gorgeous pageant of the myths of Egypt, Greece, India, and Persia;

it is woven into heroic legends which lie at the beginning of each national history; it is the unconquerable theme of triumphant prophecy. There is a pre-Christian legend that when the Buddha was born to bring the light of truth, the blind saw, the lame walked, the sick were raised up, the hungry were fed, and a universal peace reigned. This only expresses in more detail than we find in other nations a universal and deep-seated optimism which included both earth and heaven, spirit and matter, in its hope. If this deep-seated sentiment is of God he who would be the Saviour of the world must meet and complete it.

Side by side with this existed another hope, not less universal, not less profound, and in outward semblance more high and glorious — the hope of attaining heaven by giving up earth, of exalting spirit at the expense of matter. The universal symbol of this hope was the practice of fasting for some religious end. This widespread practice affords historic proof of the existence of the ascetic ideal in all nations. The ancient Hindoos and Buddhists, Egyptians and Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Jews, the Greeks and Romans, held their public fasts, and in so far as they fasted acknowledged asceticism to be an aid to the religious life. If this hope of reaching heaven by spurning earth was of God, he who would be the Saviour of the world must conform to the practice which was its universal symbol, and in his hours of physical exhaustion see God most clearly and reveal him most fully.

These two hopes are not in reality consistent

with one another, although they are seen side by side in the same religions, the same literatures, and are inextricably confused in the minds of many. There is a deep, underlying opposition between them. They have a common base in the conviction of man's sin and his need of reformation, and their common end is man's perfection and God's glory; but they hold opposing conceptions of perfection and of God.

Between these two hopes, as they struggle together in the heart of a nation or the heart of a man, there is always a profound questioning. The one asks whether it is possible to find the Creator except in his creation, whether it is possible to be in close communion with God without being in close communion with man; whether, indeed, man has any right to suppose that a God whom he conceives as so far transcending his creation as to be indifferent to any of its interests, and satisfied with the imperfection of any aspect of his creatures, is real and not a mere figment of human egotism. The other asks whether the infinite God can be apprehended through those phenomena which are conveyed to us only by the medium of our fallible and transitory senses; whether it is not necessary to diminish the power of the senses in order to be able to ignore the things of sense, and thus lessen their hold upon the mind so that it may attain to God.

That Jesus, as he grew in wisdom, pondered this great problem of religious hope, and faced it fully in the silence of thirty years, we cannot

doubt. Not only was the law in a measure ascetic, but asceticism of a high and pure type held the best religious mind of his people. The doctrine and life of the Essenes must in some respects have had his sympathy. The Baptist drew him by his moral fearlessness and high moral standard. The Messianic prophecies of his nation were varied, some couched in the language of the earthly hope, and some suggesting nothing but earthly sorrow. It is possible that after the mystic experience of new inspiration that came in the act of submitting to John's baptism Jesus may have been in doubt as to God's will concerning the physical side of life. John did not seek to heal the body; and his influence made for a higher asceticism almost as strongly as for righteousness.

It is evident that the compassions of Jesus were deeply stirred by the bodily and mental weaknesses which were the common lot of his people. With his perfect health, fasting was the only means by which he could gain the experience of the vital exhaustion which disease or privation brings. The practice of fasting in a desert place to attain mystic power was not uncommon. The desire to probe physical suffering to its depths and know its utmost value as a means of approaching God may most naturally have been part, if not the greater part, of that driving of the Spirit that led him into the wilderness. There he made trial of physical weakness.

We are told by one of the evangelists that the devil tempted him all the time that he was without food; and all of them agree that when

exhaustion was extreme, eventually bringing with it, we may assume, weakened volition, lack of control over the imagination — the delirium of starvation, the devil's great opportunity came. In that hour of intense trial, and in the relief of victory when angels ministered to his bodily needs, with the insight that comes in each strong crisis of a seer's life, Jesus must have made his reckoning once for all as to the part the flesh played in man's salvation.

What evidence have we of the form his thought took? Never after his temptation did Jesus betray any doubt as to what his "Father's business" was with the bodies and minds of men. He gave health and strength of body and mind to all who would trust him, and unhesitatingly affirmed the Father to be the giver of volitional and physical completeness, and the devil to be the origin of all that troubled it. After his temptation he never fasted, or allowed his friends to go hungry or thirsty. Very significant is the passage he chose to cite from the Jewish scriptures when the Pharisees challenged the right of his disciples to pluck corn on the Sabbath day. His reply to them was that the sacredness of the Sabbath, nay, the sacredness of the Temple, ought to be violated rather than the body weakened by fasting. The thought of the sacredness of the body as comparable to the sacredness of the Temple is again emphasised by Jesus when he refers to "the temple of his body" — a figure which St. Paul repeats. When, where, the Son of Man was Lord his disciples should eat; when the hour of

the prince of this world had come, and he, the prince of life, was taken from their sight, then — with inevitable relapse into the pious practice of an earnest age — his disciples would fast, but not in his company. In the one sacred rite he originated, in which he would carry over the joy of the feast of atonement into his kingdom, the form and symbolism he used grew, we cannot doubt, out of the intensity with which he realised that the unity of mind and body was as sacred as the unity of God and man, and was intended to guard against that last infirmity of earnest hearts, the idea that communion with God may best be attained by the disunion of man's physical and spiritual interests. That his attitude on this matter was impressed on his nearest friends is proved by the fact that when to their vision he returned from the gate of death they saw him eat food or prepare food for them. If this vision was subjective merely, it proves that such actions were for them the most familiar associations of his presence; if the vision was objective it more powerfully proves the opposition of Jesus to the principle that underlies asceticism.

How terrible to our Lord, when approaching his death, was the remembrance of the time of bodily weakness when the devil had been able to use the imagery of his pure mind for malignant purposes! His phrase "the prince of this world cometh" must have been prompted by the recollection of the fallacious glory of the mountain peak and the kingdoms of the earth. Jesus could not fear those who could only kill the body, but

he had surely learned by fasting that, as the pulses beat low and vital force ebbed, the Evil Will, even when he had nothing in common with his own, would still have power. When he spoke of that "hour and power of darkness" he could not have failed to remember the shadow of the deadly faint of starvation and the force of the alluring commands, "If thou be the Son of God, work, as other men do, for thine own ends; use, as other men do, thine own powers for thine own help." God is seen by the pure in heart while mind retains its normal power over brain and body; when this control is falling away, then he who has power to lead the passing soul to the gates of hell has his best chance. It is when the blood ebbs from the brain that hope in God is most apt to fail. As we gaze upon the cross we hear the very details of the first temptation repeat themselves: "If he be the Son of God let him save himself." "If he has cast himself on God, let him see if God will hold him up." In his extremity he was led to think that God had forsaken him; the full meaning of this we do not know, but we see it to be in harmony with the belief of Jesus that man's health is a citadel of God in this earthly life.

We cannot believe that Jesus intended to endorse, or in any way encourage, the effort to increase the divine fire by cooling the embers of every earthly hope. Your father in heaven numbers the hairs of your head, knows your earthly needs, will clothe you like the flowers, and feed you as easily as the birds are fed. God so loved the world that he gave his Son. All this was not

teaching to make earth appear unworthy of man's love. Whoso gives up father or mother or houses or lands for my sake shall receive a hundred-fold in this present time. The meek shall inherit the earth. The Son of Man who, as he himself said, "came eating and drinking," gave man every earthly gift except riches, entered by sympathy into every earthly joy that was not vicious, offered salvation from every earthly care except the care of love for the life of men. He never spoke of earth as being unfit to be the scene of God's heavenly activities. What then? If he came to bring a salvation as truly earthly as it was purely of heaven, did he not come also to fulfil the hope of those who looked beyond the things of sense for their only satisfaction — who felt that earth was of no value to them except as a path to heaven? On the contrary it was out of this very doctrine of God's care for the body that Jesus educed the triumphant certainty of God's faithfulness to man's immortal spirit. It is the "how much more" of all his parabolic teaching which compels us to glorify rather than vilify the lower factor in the comparison. If God clothe the grass of the field so splendidly, how much more shall he clothe man. If his care is so great for the sparrow, how much more for man. And the sequence of thought goes on: if food is given for the body, how much more will the life within be fed. The gift is sacred; how much more the altar without whose spiritual sanctity the gift would be nothing. Greater than the temple is he that dwelleth in the temple. The letter is nothing except as the expression of spirit.

Now clearly the whole force of this argument by comparison depends on making the most of the lesser thing in the comparison. The greatness of God's care for the body is the evidence of his still greater care for the soul. The inner life and the life beyond the veil rise in value in proportion as the outer life and the life here is seen to be valued by God; and just in proportion to the stress laid upon the glory of the spiritual it becomes safe and necessary to emphasise the glory of the material.

In putting the supreme emphasis on the inner and heavenly life Jesus emphasised its dangers as they were never emphasised before. In proportion as the spirit is more than the flesh the sins of the spirit are worse than the sins of the flesh. Therefore, though God intends man to have moral and physical completeness, the Christian will be willing to suffer physical ill if so he may rescue his fellow from spiritual suffering which is so much worse than any physical suffering. Thus it is that human pain becomes a factor in the plan of salvation. Jesus declares that in the supreme and eternal aspect of his life man may sin most deeply, may lose himself; and he holds up the picture of this possibility before the eyes of the compassionate. It is to the compassion and magnanimity of the children of the kingdom that Jesus makes his appeal when by his whole example, his every act and word, he urges the missionary life on all. There is no imitation of Jesus possible outside the missionary life; in the exercise of whatever calling, wherever he be, always, in speech or silence, in action or passion, the child of the kingdom is

one "sent" to bring the world to God. As a missionary a man will always come to hand-to-hand grapple with all the forms of pain, for they are the instruments of the forces of evil. It is the acceptance of injustice and wrong by the missionary which drives home his message at last to the heart of the unthankful and unjust. Hence pain has saving grace, not for him who suffers it, but for him who inflicts it upon the innocent. It is certainly the salvation of the persecutor that is the reward of the persecuted. To be the salt of the earth, to be the light of the world, is not a personal honour, not a private reward; it is to share in the joy and in the pain of God, who works for the ultimate perfection of his whole creation.

CHAPTER II

THE PROTEST OF THE PARABLE

To be universal a religion ought to be a living plant, indigenous to humanity, its roots struck far and wide into the heart of this nation and that, drawing nourishment from all the ages that are past, a thing old yet entirely new, containing all that is essential and hampered with nothing unessential; for only as it is an essential thing, able to enter into the temperaments and necessities of every race in every time and place, a thing without which nature remains incomplete and human nature baffled and unsatisfied, can it reach the whole world.

When the Hebrew tribes left Egypt and settled themselves in Canaan, they were on the ground where the advanced religions of Egypt and Babylonia touched each other; it was also the meeting-place of several less developed tribal religions. It was bound, by geographical position, to be a fighting ground for many nations, to be for many centuries traversed continually by religions, laws, and customs from Africa, Asia, and Europe. The moral gains of the various

nations of Semitic and Aryan stock were brought to Zion, not because of her greatness, not because of her political strength, but in spite of her insignificance and because of her political weakness. The Hebrews had the genius for religion, and "the heritage of the children of the Lord" was a school of many nations, in which their righteousness was developed, as all strong righteousness is, by the choosing of the good from all things and the eschewing of the evil. If in the conflict of life the Israel of God, tossed with tempest and taking no comfort, mistook her strength and thought that to eschew the evil was the primary duty, it only made the mistake that the human heart, corporate or individual, always makes till it meets with the great enlightenment that transforms the moralist into saint or seer and morality into a Gospel of God.

This mistake made the Jews, in their thoughts and literature, assume a separatist position which does not correspond with their actual history. The Jewish religion — cradled in Egypt, schooled in Babylon, its home a pathway of nations, its adherents forced to learn the language of the Greeks and to comprehend the laws of Rome — was formed by God out of the dust of religious battle. The "salvation" which was "of the Jews" could have been no strong tower, no house of peace, if it had not contained all the energies of truth that worked for the development and informed the progress of mankind. To be able to understand colloquial Greek, to be ready to talk with men and to understand what was in

them, and to be within reach of any great high-road of the Roman Empire, were, in the days of Jesus, conditions sufficient for acquiring, not an intimate knowledge of foreign systems of thought, but that fluent essence of each masterful theology which passes from heart to heart in beautiful imagery, in terse aphorism, and in unexpected precept.

The ignorance of the European peasant has been too suggestive in this connection; it has often been claimed in our apologetic writings that there was a like ignorance among the peasants of Palestine when Jesus lived among them, which ignorance is urged as a proof of our Lord's inspiration. But the ways of God are more natural. There could not have been any such ignorance in the home at Nazareth. The knowledge Jesus shows of the Hebrew scriptures evinces a mental discipline which we have every reason to believe was the result of the usual local instruction in the law and the prophets. This mental discipline comes out in that incident where the doctors in the temple at Jerusalem are startled with the intellectual power evinced in the questions of the child Jesus at the age when curiosity and thought begin to develop. These doctors received disciples from all parts of the civilised world. They were quite able to judge of a boy's mental calibre. We have, then, two facts that help us to estimate what the mental equipment of Jesus would be — the fact of his eager intelligent curiosity, and the fact that Galilee, in which he lived, was not dominated by that small Jewish school which

set itself to resist foreign influence. At this time the Jews of the Dispersion from every known land, proselytes from every nation, who seem to have come chiefly from the intellectual classes, with traders and political agents, were always travelling through Galilee and Samaria to Jerusalem, especially to the great annual feast. From the age of twelve to that of thirty Jesus travelled once a year, making the same slow, pleasant journey on this caravan road. We cannot suppose that, with a mind full of eager questions concerning religion, he would remain ignorant of such things as Gentile pilgrims could teach. The honourable place which he assigns to the Gentiles from east and west and north and south in the kingdom of God, the incidents in which he repeatedly held up their faith as an example to the Jews, are consonant, not only with his deep insight, but with a knowledge of other nations and other religions.

Let us consider what the outlook upon the world at this time must have been to a Jew deeply impressed with the power and love of God.

In so far as men could worship God by prayer, by praise, by offerings, by alms-giving and by self-discipline, men did worship him. God could not be unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love — the holy ministry which in some form every religion inculcated. A good God must have imparted himself to the worshipping millions of his children on earth to the extent that they could learn of him, and yet they were all disputing as to his name and nature and the way in which he was to be approached. Again,

what the reason of man could do in approaching God by the rules and abstractions of metaphysical thought had been done. God being eager to impart himself to man everywhere and always, so far as man by thinking could then attain to him he must already have attained; for a further step toward God it was not more knowledge that was wanted, but a fitter man. Had it been possible to frame in human thought an unerring presentation of God, a system of worship that would be a perfect vehicle of approach to God, it was certain that man had no words in which to express it, no heart fitted to perceive its perfection. It was not a new religion that was needed, but a new man — new men better able to know themselves and their fellows, hence to understand the simple secret of God.

There were sufficient data, from the Jewish point of view, on which to form these conclusions. The Jews in Palestine were only the centre of a large and virile nation which had spread itself into every place where the Greek or Latin civilisation obtained. While the Jews of the Dispersion kept themselves ceremonially separate from the nations among whom they lived, they were everywhere accreting to their religion proselytes from the thoughtful classes of the heathen. The best features of the Jewish religion were, to the spiritually-minded, simple enough and pure enough to be the means of a much higher national life than the world had seen. But the ethics of a nation are not to be estimated by the few written pages that represent the highest development of

its moral genius so much as by the beliefs and practices of the majority of its people. The exaltation of Greek ethical thought was followed by the swift decadence of the Greek race, and this is an instance of what is characteristic of the religious world at the Christian era. Its attention was fixed on all those aspects of life that are matter for argument. Philosophers were busy trying to probe to the reality beneath appearance, but the knowledge they gained was not widely applied to life. The Jewish religion, which to the spiritual few appeared to have such an unparalleled opportunity for healing the nations, was wasting its strength upon fantastic excesses of doctrine and ritual and casuistry. The dry rot of the literalism and materialistic follies of the school that repelled Hellenism were only a little worse than the allegorical symbolism of the Hellenistic Jews. Everywhere, in its pursuit of God, the world was chiefly intent upon what could be spoken and written and argued about. And this universal disputation between different religions, and between different sects within religions, had its worst shadow in the proportionate bigotry and narrowness of such small sections as agreed among themselves.

It would certainly seem, from the form his ministry took, that Jesus regarded the world as famine-stricken, trying to feed upon husks, fighting with swords and with words concerning codes and legends, ceremonies and doctrines, wasting its strength in vain repetitions and much speaking, and overlooking what would satisfy and unite. Jesus made his great protest against the barren

strife of religious tongues by refusing to teach except in parables. His very explanations of his parables were still parables. When he quotes the Old Testament he chooses its parables. He never spoke of heaven except in figures of earth, or of God except in terms of man. "Without a parable spake he not." Parabolic teaching has this for its very essence, that its form is not essential; all that man can speak or write or argue about is a dress, and only a dress, clothing an inner truth. But the choice of parable as a method of conveying truth, although it implies that no particular form is essential, also implies that form is important. There is no method of conveying thought by speech which draws so much attention to the form. The form is everything except essential. Another form may convey the truth just as well, but to convey it as well it must be as beautiful, as simple, as true to the conditions of sense and as suggestive of the spiritual lesson. Here, then, are two requisites of the way in which the religion Jesus sought to implant must be conveyed to the world — it must have an outward form precise and beautiful, but the form must never be considered essential; there may be many forms.

We come then to the truth that was to be conveyed by this message. It was a life. In the ministry of Jesus we meet with nothing but the concrete man in a concrete environment. He maintained a profound silence upon those aspects of religion that could not be brought to the test of religious experience. God's forgiveness meant the reception of that forgiveness in man's religious

consciousness. God's providence was to be tested by man exactly as man's providence was tested by his child. Man's relation to God is to be apprehended, as he apprehends his relation to his fellow-man, in apprehending Jesus.

Jesus came to men who were full of theories and wasting their zeal. He said, in effect, it is new life that is wanted — the life we now live fuller, stronger, raised in all its aspects toward perfection. It is more love that is wanted — natural, human love, deeper, truer, and flowing into all channels. This was not a new idea. It had been the transient vision of the highest and lowliest of mankind. What was new was the putting it into practice, the gift of a perfect life and a perfect love to the empty arms and aching heart of the world.

The Christian believes that history vindicates the method of Jesus. Just in so far as men have partaken of his life by living it have they communed with God and blessed the world; just in so far as they have loved the Perfect Love they have loved the world in deed and in truth and given themselves to save it; just in so far as they have done this they have attained to a wider outlook and wider knowledge and seen a more glorious vision of God. Wherever the Christian has failed it has commonly been by reason of his failure to trust the method of Jesus for himself and for his own age.

The present age in religious matters is very like the age of Jesus. How many different religions we have! How many sects within the

religions! And those particular sects which claim to be the only true sect feel the reaction of their contest with the world most by its result upon their inward attitude; a degree of bigotry and ignorance is forced upon them by the intense partisan feeling which is needed to maintain their outward propaganda.

We do not need to turn our attention to a better organisation, still less do we want to break down such organisations as exist. We want the intense realisation, based upon psychological fact, based upon the highest inspiration of the prophets, based upon the practice and preaching of Jesus, that those who offer to God the same thoughts, the same desires, the same adoration, have not to hope for union with each other — they are in union with each other; their union is not to become a strength, but is a strength — a strength which no outward organisation, having its own sort of strength, can increase. We need to realise that those who are thus united to one another in purpose are at the same time at one with the purposes of God, are members of an organism whose health and growth are of God, and that the consummation of his purposes is sure. There is always the need of withdrawing temporarily from the things of sense in order to find God. In the matter of such union as Jesus taught, we need a frequent withdrawal of attention from external union. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also

may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me."[1] It is here quite obvious that the union of Jesus with God was not an outward union. The glory which the Father gave him was an inner glory of the heart which by the sympathetic could be observed only in his gracious attitude and benevolent works, and which altogether escaped the notice of the officious partisan or blinded devotee.

All that man can learn of God's truth, by pure reason or practical philosophy, by religious systems, by outward symbols or by their absence, it is certain that man has learned and is learning. There is no window of the human heart which man opens Godward into which God himself does not gladly come. And if in the midst of all these we still faint for his fulness of life, we must realise that all we can do to attain it is to seek some more fundamental condition which evidently we still lack. The great reformation of Jesus lay in pointing out this fundamental condition and laying the whole stress of man's search for God upon realising it.

The supreme duty of fostering the fundamental condition of a pure life and a strong determination to love will not be denied by the advocates of any sane philosophy or any reasonable system

[1] St. John xvii. 20–23.

of religion. It goes without saying that it is necessary to man to give his adhesion at any given time to such theory and practice as seem to him most reasonable. The living of the Christ-life in the spiritual and moral sphere ought not to come into collision with the doctrinaires of any school, any more than the acceptance of the doctrine of bodily health by faith in God ought to come into collision with the principles of medical science. Just as no physician worthy of the name can do aught but rejoice in the actual increase of health and strength that any patient may obtain through faith in God, so inward life in the spiritual sphere by its increase and its greater activities of love ought not to distress the most bigoted advocate of any religious party. He may desire to divert it into channels in which by its very nature it cannot flow, but there are channels of love in harmony with every Christian system into which it can flow, for it is a missionary life, and its message is to express God's love.

Surely, then, looking to the future, we need not be deterred from venturing upon the life of faith in full accordance with the life and teaching of Jesus merely because our imagination fails when we try to think in what outward organisation or system of worship it could most fitly be embodied. It is not matter that forms life, but life that forms matter; it is not thought that forms life, but life that takes the form of thought. Those who cry that without finality in organisation or in thought, we cannot have life are expecting the effect before the cause.

CHAPTER III

THE FIGHTING SPIRIT

THE life which Jesus taught begins its reform with the nearest and smallest changes, and they, in their turn, bring about the greater changes in ways that we can neither see nor foresee. We invert the order in our minds, and then cry that we cannot accept his rule. For instance, we are faced with the entire antagonism of Jesus to the fighting spirit; but we do not see how it is possible for man to give up fighting. We overlook the private possibilities that lie to our hands, and exhibit the largest and ultimate part of the problem, asking how the world can be rid of international war. What folly is this! Let common sense come to our aid, and we shall find it a wonderful echo of what we have been calling the visionary ideal of Jesus. What advantage is it to the cause of love for a man to refuse to fight the enemies of his country abroad and stay to fight his brother at home? Or if he refrain from striking his brother, is peace the gainer if he nourish ill feeling and repeat slanders, even though the ill feeling and slander be only political or religious? Are we

in a position, individual or corporate, that would make the cessation of international war a boon? This is the first question to ask. Let us begin at home, and each man with his own heart and household. And first let us be straight in our thinking and afterwards promote peace. The hypocrisy only half unconscious, with which we talk about our desire to be at peace with all mankind while we hate our neighbour, is a tribute to the fact that the Christian ideal does not admit of the motives that lead to disputes, but is also a proof of that loose, emotional thinking which is a worse enemy to the cause of Jesus than free thinking.

What really makes it impossible at present to realise the peace of the Christ-life is that we love fighting, and that it seems to us exceedingly wholesome. How else can we show that we are in earnest about anything? How else can we defend the weak against the strong? How else can we ensure that the right shall prevail? And when we ask ourselves these questions we picture some foreign enemy advancing ruthless against our own defenceless hearths, some domestic tyrant oppressing our defenceless neighbours, and the enemies of God despoiling his church and setting up a lie in the place of the truth, while we sit indolent, smiling upon the transgressor; our blood boils at the thought of any man advocating such a condition of things, and we all feel ready to die in battle.

Let us be honest. What living sacrifices have we made toward building up stronger conditions in church and state and domestic life, in all those ways in which we could have sacrificed our lives

for them without fighting? If we have done little in times of peace except to please ourselves, let us realise that, in plunging into every contest, it is not sacrifice for some great end, but battle that we love. Let us admit that we love it because it seems an effective weapon for good, while to exercise our powers thus is a pleasurable activity. Let us go further, and say that it is good. In comparison with a life that is slack and pleasure-loving, strife is good; in comparison with a life that is only keen for what it can get, warfare in a good cause is noble. The energies with which nature has endowed man must be developed to their utmost capacity. Religion that does not do this is not in harmony with the laws of nature and of God.

And the call of Jesus is for all the forces of human heroism. He instituted a reformation which was to begin in the individual heart. The aggregate of such renovated hearts becomes an organism which grows within any outward organisation of state or nation. The problem of international war will only become practical when, in respect of fighting, the ideal and practice of the individual Christian is that of Jesus. What is the sequence by which Jesus attains the reformation of the individual heart? Purpose must acquire a divine strength; the determination to give must dominate the desire to get; the ambition to serve must regulate the necessity of being served; the desire to receive honour from men must vanish in the honour of being a friend of God; and, above all, there must be no slovenly thinking, no

hypocritical resting in words that do not represent the heart truly. This is the beginning of his reformation of the individual heart. The first step in the Kingdom, nay, toward the entrance of the Kingdom, is strong personal purpose. Something has to be done, and all things that hinder are to be put aside. When Jesus met the rich man whose character had both moral and spiritual beauty, he said to him, in effect, "What you lack is strength of purpose, a purpose that counts nothing dear in order to attain." It is a lack characteristic of those who have all they want. The strength of purpose which Jesus demanded is too strong a vital force to be realised in any one simple maxim of conduct, such as that all self-regarding action is wrong, all unselfish action right. Hence much talk about selfishness and unselfishness is loose and misses the mark. In one of his letters the late Prof. Sidgwick says, "There is nothing so selfish as work;" and in this connection work is the expression of purpose. Jesus said of his own career, "For this cause came I into the world;" the private claims of home and kindred were subordinate to his purpose, and his purpose dominates the ages. St. Paul's "This one thing I do," turned the world upside down. A man without a mastering purpose, an over-mastering ambition, an unquenchable desire for true honour, is a man whose life is not worth giving to God or the world. He may as well keep it and make the most of it for his own ends — the most will not be much. A man who has this force of character and uses it for his own ends is represented in the

imagery of Jesus as a better man than the weak person who lives on good intentions, and as in that respect a model for him. But undoubtedly the great power that Christianity pre-eminently has lies in its gift of joy which elicits overwhelming strength of purpose and ambition and makes heroism from such material as is ignored by other moral movements. From the broken reed the joy of Jesus evokes the noblest notes of heroic music; from smoking flax his breath can bring the fire that lights and warms the world. But the music must be noble, the fire must reach to heaven. The first great work of Jesus is to evoke purpose. There must be ambition and unquenchable desire, and passion that bends all things to its use.

Next in the order of Jesus comes the manifestation of the purpose in life. A reformation that begins by evoking the strong flood of positive energies in the individual heart will surely break through old standards and conventions; it must emphasise individuality and produce originality. The inevitable result will be that purpose and effort will flow into new channels.

The relation between life and individual difference is so close that fuller life must always be marked by more individual difference. We overlook this partly because opinions formed without adequate knowledge are the most annoying, and therefore the most commonly observed, outcome of the individual difference — opinions which the individual vanity is apt to flaunt, like some eccentric and absurd personal adornment. A personal opinion which in any way controverts the common

opinion is only justified by a more than common knowledge of the facts concerned, a degree of knowledge which is not within the reach of many. Yet although ignorant opinions are the bad bye-product of individual reflection, none the less is it true that the most widely received truth is a dead letter except so far as it receives the individual impress.

The spirit that gives life only manifests itself in individuality. This is seen in vegetable and animal life; in human life the individual difference is greatest. We are told that there are no two germs, no two blades of grass, alike: this appalls the mind and gives dignity to the dust. The use and beauty of this minute diversity we cannot comprehend; but we do know intuitively that humanity would cease to be human, and God cease to be God, if the mill of the universe could turn out two men in mind and heart and will the same. Two little children who built their toy bricks always alike would destroy human hope. Two idiots whose senseless habits were alike; two men of genius who produced the same epic, the same oratorio, the same philosophy; two vain women who could make toys of men with the same charm or tricks, would pronounce our final doom. Gloom, endless gloom, would fall upon our hearts if the human duplicate were seen.

It follows that the religion which begins by exciting more intense life in purpose and ambition will certainly be propagated by such original thought and enterprise as will most fully express each man. Hackneyed and conventional activities

will mark its temporary decline, never, as we are apt to suppose, its increase. That Jesus did make his appeal to force of will and ambition and the desire for self-realisation and expression, there can be no doubt. His cry was not for common men and women but for heroes. He rejected men who showed themselves distracted with other interests, or slack, or fearful. He called men from the hardy, adventurous class; he called for men who would fear nothing, who would go unhampered by possessions to the conquest of the world. He set before them a task the magnitude of which made its accomplishment appear quite impossible. He left them to exercise their own wit in their choice of methods, and he set before them a reward which could only be attained by faithfulness that reached to death. He held the door of this splendid opportunity open, not only to the gifted and the free, but to the slave, the woman, and the child. The paths of intercession, not the least heroic of Christian ways, start from the scenes of humblest toil, offering to all the forces and originality of the soul an entrance to the highest heaven, an influence in the empire of the world.

But further, while Jesus appealed to all that was positive and active in the human heart, the very formation of purpose, with all its outflow, imposes a corresponding restraint. To press toward a mark is not only to neglect, but to reject, all that hinders. Here it is evident that if a man's ambition soars to the salvation of a race, he must have a very full knowledge of the

complex conditions of life, or some simple guiding principle which carries within it a separating force by which to distinguish effective from ineffective means. The most complete knowledge of magnetic force can only lead men to utilise it by conforming to its laws, and such knowledge will produce magnificent results; but long before such knowledge was thought of, the use of the compass enabled every mariner to cross the sea. The example and teaching of Jesus is such a compass for the man who is simple enough and wise enough to accept it; and he from his experience can prove that it answers the purpose. In the matter of the fighting spirit, the compass has not been accepted by corporate Christianity. Instead of crossing the sea with the splendid audacity of faith, we as a body have determined our devious course by hugging the shores of expediency, and have suffered shipwreck.

This brings us to the crown and culmination of the change of heart which Jesus works in those who truly love him. When a man bends the whole force of his nature upon the attainment of Jesus, he has the intuitive vision of truth and love always at one, never at variance, and with every step he takes toward the realisation of the Christ-life his vision grows clearer. Such a man knows that he has always with him a force greater than that of twelve legions of angels; but he does not use his power to coerce or weaken his fellow-men. Truth cannot suffer loss. As well slay men in defence of the law of gravitation. Love is already lost when we draw the sword in her defence. We

cannot alter natural law or detract from natural force; we cannot get away from their dominion. By ignorance and disobedience we can suffer under them, or lose their beneficent power. It is only by making experiment of them that we can learn from or honour them; it is only by implicit obedience that we can win from them any blessing. The salvation of Jesus in the heart of a man causes him to realise that truth and love are one, and that nothing man can do can alter their dominion or gauge their force. It is only by experiment on the lines of their force that he can learn or teach Christianity; it is only by implicit obedience to them that mankind can attain to any further good.

In his earthly day Jesus came saying, "Turn from what you are, and what you are doing, to a better life, in which God will rule and defend and bless you." To-day he comes with precisely the same call, "Turn, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." If we have received some elements of heaven on earth from our Christian fathers and won some advantage for ourselves, we are still as far from what is possible to us as was the world when Jesus came. To think otherwise is to be among the righteous and effeminate for whom Jesus has no vocation.

Every one is needed for some part of the three-fold enterprise on which the servants of Jesus are sent. All that benefits the body, all that benefits the mind, all that makes man one in purpose and hope with God, is to be achieved by them. What strength, what ambition, what talent, what

honourable impulse, cannot find scope in such a task? Is there not for us, as there was for St. Paul, enough to tax the strength and craft, the courage and resource, that any man can use in the task of saving men rather than destroying them? If the powers of all Christian men were thus employed we should not hear of the needed discipline of war. And with the progress of ages the work to which Jesus sends his servants is seen to be greater and more varied. Everywhere on the fringes of empire there is constructive work and helpful work to be done — a wrestle with the forces of nature, a battle with the elements, demand for the self-control that means also the control of untutored men. Everywhere there is an army of defence wanted at home for the rescue work of the slum. Everywhere companies of boys and men, with a hero for a leader — a man who can organise and command — can be lifted from the degraded and criminal classes to be useful citizens. There is danger, there is certain failure, for men who have not high qualities of courage and generalship; but the work is everywhere, and the soul of every child born within our civilisation who develops only to base uses cries to God against the brother who turns his heroism and soldierly abilities to a less useful end. In the commerce of the world Christ calls everywhere for the spirit of financial martyrdom, for commercial heroes who, instead of seeking immoderate gain, will create in commerce safe paths for the feet of the poor and honest. In the present state of things such men will almost certainly be crushed to the

wall, but their followers will profit by their loss. In the journalism of the world Christ is calling for men who at any cost will refuse to lend themselves as tools to party spirit, political or religious. There is no learned profession, no path of humble livelihood, where Christ is not seeking for the pioneers and martyrs of a newer and better life.

How many among those who call themselves Christian men are working like heroes in the building of the City of God? Perhaps, at a high estimate, one man in five hundred. The least we can do is to honour those who thus work; yet, instead of that, it is these very men — be they bishops or missionaries or Salvation Army captains — whom we continually criticise, holding them responsible for the low standards of which we ourselves are the best advertisement.

But let us be quite sure of one thing — the vital force that makes a hero is not mimetic. The outward semblance of heroism and sainthood will never be in a new age what it was in a former age. One chief source of our lifelessness is that we all, like the typical milliner's apprentice, want to read and dream about some once manly type of virtue and honour which by repetition has become artificial and therefore vulgar. Sainthood must be original or it is not sainthood. In other paths of life we acknowledge the weakness of imitation; how can we more effectually damn a man for any worldly use than by saying, "He has no originality, no individual resource"? Why is it that to-day we have few great men except in the field of science? Largely because,

except in the scientific field, we test greatness by a conventional standard. If we could only realise this we might perhaps be roused out of the vulgarity of our religious conformities and class prejudices and paltry expectations.

Consider St. Paul, whose inspiration as an apostle can only be truly recognised by a Church that trains all her sons to try to do as much for God as he did. His work is still to be done at home and abroad. In every heathen country the dangers he encountered are still to be met; the hardships he suffered are still to be endured; the success of winning half a continent to Christ is still open to men who have his pluck and his staying power, his enterprise and his lowly estimate of his own righteousness. It is not indeed a great store of Christian knowledge or love that is needed to start with. If we read St. Paul's letters in the order in which he wrote them we shall see how his faith and knowledge grew by degrees and with much labour. It was not at first but at last that he wrote, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." [1]

It is private enterprise that Jesus calls for first, and the reformation we so sorely need must begin in the silence of the heart. When purpose is strong, restraint will be as natural as outflow. The crying need of the world is not legislation but self-government, not the taking of cities but the ruling of our own hearts. We are most of us set within states and churches which are not

[1] 2 Tim. i. 12.

governed by the people in them; nor yet by wise statesmen and ecclesiastics whom the people could blindly trust; they are governed by the media through which the people get their information of men and things — the newspaper or demagogue, political and religious. There is some saving common sense within us about these matters, for we all profess to be a little above party belligerence, and to think ill of the man or woman who is always redolent of the partisan or sectarian newspaper; but we are ourselves the more vulnerable to the half-truths we are constantly hearing and reading because, while we enjoy them, we feel ourselves able to discount their influence. The root of the matter is our liking. If we enjoy party invective, however clever, however moderately worded, against any set of men — Liberals or Conservatives, Democrats or Republicans, Socialists or Plutocrats, Romanists or Protestants, Anglicans or Methodists, Englishmen or Germans, Irishmen or Americans — we are steadily cutting ourselves off from the power of truth and love. Every day we are less able to see what is true, to know what is good, and more incapable of participation in the work of God. The newspaper and the demagogue are our servants; they are what we make them; that the best of them fail to obtain support, that the majority of them are what they are, is incontrovertible proof of the anaemic nature of our Christianity. Heroism of Christian purpose requires us to refuse to support and refuse to applaud the half-truths and invective that we are most ready, by our training

and prejudices, to enjoy. Do we think that life would be impossible and intolerable without it? that the State would fail and the Church crumble? Just so did the leaders in Jerusalem think when they said that if Jesus continued to live the Romans would come and take away their place and nation.

CHAPTER IV

THE SWORD AND THE MUCKRAKE

In the matter of international war the question is not to be solved in the present state of affairs. Our hope is that in a better state of affairs that the future may bring a solution may be found; and while we see men on all sides shaking their heads and calling such a hope a poet's dream, we may perhaps show that it is not an unreasonable hope.

If we go back some thirty years, and find some intelligent deliverance upon this same topic, it will enable us to see how far and how fast public sentiment has travelled. Take Dr. Mozley's sermon on war.[1] No man could be more clear-headed. He finds war vindicated first by the fact that patriotism is a duty, and that the man who has a conscientious objection to fighting is not a patriot. This last statement is made with the assurance with which it is now echoed only in the jingo journals and the schoolboy's debating club. Even thinkers who advocate disarmament are not now accused of being unpatriotic because

[1] *University Sermons* by Canon Mozley, Sermon III.

they do not believe in war, the patriotism of the apostles of peace having been amply proved. Quite recently a French politician, M. Naquet, wrote in the *Nineteenth Century* advocating disarmament for France, but the reviewers, though they called him an 'amiable visionary,' did not suggest any want of patriotism. Dr. Mozley admits that Christianity denounces the motives which lead to war — rapacity, selfish ambition, tyranny, and vanity; but finds its second vindication in the fact that it is the only court in which the disputes of nations can be tried and decided to the satisfaction of both combatants. This part of the sermon is as clear a presentation of the real difficulty as can be found; but when he proceeds to say that, because there never has been an international tribunal to which all nations will defer, there never will be such a court, we realise that he is writing in the latest decade in which a thinker could take it for granted that the future must be like the past. The dynamite of the theory of evolution had already blown up such a position with regard to the future in every stronghold but that of morality and religion; a few years later, and the power of the idea, which opened the future to unlimited hope, had found a place in the religious mind, and no man could henceforth stand in a scholastic pulpit and measure the possibilities of the future by the past. The next argument is still more antiquated, viz., that war must have been accepted by Jesus as a necessity because it was a part of the régime of his time and he says nothing against it! Slavery, trial by

torture, imprisonment of debtors for life in vile dungeons, barbarous forms of executing criminals, such as stoning and crucifixion, arbitrary government, and that abomination which has degraded every Eastern nation, the farming of taxes — all these have the same tacit permission to exist! The new life which Jesus brought into the world was the axe which was laid to the root of those trees; as they are cut at the root by the development of the Christian life, so one by one in process of time they wither away. This we all admit.

If in a quarter of a century such a change has come over the mind of the religious world as makes this sermon sound like a mere echo of the past, if the necessity for war does not appear to be so well established in the minds of men as it was but a few decades ago, we must acknowledge these are hopeful indications. We do not need the calling of meetings, or much talking, or letters in the newspapers; still less do we want the organisation of new societies. These may have their place, but they are not essential. Each of us must be resolute to form in his own heart a purpose strong enough to mould his own life; it is the only way of obtaining a corporate purpose strong enough to mould the world.

We hear of the men of high ideals who in the past put their best workmanship into the churches and cathedrals they erected to the glory of God, and sometimes people sigh pensively as if the age of this virtue were past. We are right in feeling that the house that we build for the Lord must be "exceeding magnifical," but it is a living house,

built of thought and feeling, purpose and restraint, such as, being handed on to the men of the future, will make their lives more beautiful and more instinct with the life of God. And the walls of this living house are not, can never be, marred by the hideous thoughts and emotions born of partisan misrepresentations and national animosities. These, should they touch the house, must be burned by the inexorable fire of Love, who is the master-builder.

As we allow ourselves to be deterred from realising the kingdom of love on earth by the difficulty of imagining how the governments of earth can become inoffensive and forgiving toward one another, so we allow ourselves to be deterred from living the careless, disinterested life of the kingdom by our inability to arrange the commerce of the world on any other principle than that each work to obtain the greatest material advantage for himself. We do not, indeed, see how to arrange the trade of our own town, or even our neighbours' business, upon the lines laid down by Jesus. But, after all, that is not what we are asked to do. It is not our theories but our life that Jesus offers to inspire with wisdom and power; nor is it even the life of to-morrow, but simply the life of to-day, which he offers to inspire. It is ours thus to obey, and to die if need be, trusting to God, whose universal laws in their working take account of every individual fact, and give it its due influence in the final result. The laws of social life, the facts of history, both tell us that if any number of men in a community

set themselves to think and to work by some new plan or dynamic idea, the future of that community is not the same as its past. The commerce of the world to-day is more capable of moderation and improvement because of every truly disinterested life which has been lived; and it is by the power of such lives that communities are so changed that what appeared impossible to one generation becomes, to a future generation, a necessity of thought and action.

History shows that, within what we call Christian civilisation, the nature of business transactions between men has undergone changes which would have defied any human forecast, and certainly tend to a more equal distribution of opportunity than did earlier customs. In the Middle Ages, to trust your neighbour with your money that he might trade with it if you could not, and so make a profit both for himself and you, was a thing unknown. The man who had money, if he could not himself employ it, hid it, often in the ground, where it could benefit no one. The constant local warfare, the lack of any broad basis of trust between city and city and nation and nation, made hoarding the only method of storing wealth. There being no legitimate use for borrowed capital, the honest man never borrowed. The spendthrift was the only borrower, and the risk attending the transaction compelled the lender to charge a high rate of interest, which brought him and his trade into sometimes undeserved contempt. How impossible would it have been for a man of that age

to conceive of a time when lending and borrowing would be, not merely legitimate, but essential to the welfare of the community! A complexity of causes brought about our complex modern credit system; a system under which, on the whole, the covetous life is productive of more widespread harm, while a liberal life can be lived more liberally, with wider results for good, and also reproduce itself in more widespread benevolence. All that is pointed out here is that so great a change proves that progress is possible in what seem the most settled ways of men.

All that is good in modern business conditions must have come about by the action of the Divine Mind upon the corporate mind of man, working especially through those who had the laws of fair dealing at heart. If, then, men in business life should begin more and more to set their hearts upon endowing the world with such new commercial standards as shall make the acquisition of superfluous wealth a dishonour rather than an honour, and all sharp dealing as much to be abhorred as is usury now, there is every reason to expect a greater difference between the commercial standards of to-day and those of a future century than obtains between the present and the past. Such pioneers would undoubtedly meet with commercial persecution, and many would need to face the loss of all and the worse sorrow of involving those who have trusted them. But if the Christian hope be true, the right would gradually prevail in the very market-place, and on the exchange the worship of Mammon would be

dethroned. Money would become a blessing rather than a curse, because the love of money would have ceased to dominate the commercial mind, and the command against covetousness would be reverenced amongst all good men as the command against stealing now is. Nothing less than this can be the Christian's hope; but it will not be attained easily, not by mere hoping or pious aspiration. It will need men in increasing numbers increasingly set on carrying the purpose of Jesus into every form of commerce, and ceaselessly presenting the desire for the accomplishment of God's will on earth. It is in such matters as this that the parable of the unjust judge is the stay of those who have the welfare of the kingdom at heart.

The path does not open very far to our sight; but there can be no question that there is a treasure of heaven hid in the field of human commerce, and it is only by selling all that we have that we shall be able to gain it. It is not ours to dogmatise, yet, among the forecasts of those who try to think how the commercial world is to become the kingdom of our Lord, the extreme Socialists seem to be trying to take a shorter cut to the end than is the way of Jesus. Total abstinence from any element in life not in itself a vice, unless it be as a temporary and personal expedient, seems to be a broad rather than a narrow road. Once entered upon, it is easy, fatally easy; it ignores some factor of life, instead of moulding it to its purpose. If men are to abstain wholly from personal possessions it is

difficult to see how they can carry out the many-sided activities of the Christian ideal. If, for example, a man's earthly welfare is secured by the laws of the community, how can he exercise the virtue of taking no thought for the morrow? What faith is required to trust God for food and raiment? How can he give away all that he possesses? How, if his portion of goods, and that of everybody else, is measured, can he give, or take, the overflowing measure which one neighbour ought to give into the bosom of another?

It is commonly said that children brought up in some dependent position, having no possessions or privileges of their own to give away, are lacking in the capacity for gratitude. Further investigation on this point is most desirable. If gratitude, the choicest flower of the soul, only blooms in the atmosphere of possession, rooted in generosity rather than in receptivity, it would seem that to deprive man of the control of possessions, even though it be to promote his material and intellectual welfare, may be to tamper with the very source of his highest life.

Whether Socialism be a mistake or not, it is probably one of those phases through which we shall go to the perfect life. History has shown that many things "must needs come" and pass away. There is, in the evolution of mankind, apart from the life of the kingdom, something swinging to and fro, like a vast pendulum in the clock of the ages, brushing aside first one class of men and then another with some appearance of secular justice. The priest for generations tyran-

nises over the people, and the age comes when the people tyrannise over the priest. The class tyrannises over the mass, and in turn the mass tyrannises over the class. The sword has emptied the purse; the purse will sheathe the sword in rust. Capital has abused its power; labour is scarcely a human factor if it does not take its turn of privilege and abuse of privilege. When the great swing of the clock of time pushes us to the wall it is useless to get angry, still more useless to whine. The punishments will fall hardest on the innocent, but the brave will learn the lessons they teach.

There is always the refuge of the yoke of God, the "more excellent way" which St. Paul found so good, the way of giving up place and power and riches for Jesus' sake before they are taken from us. At the same time, it cannot be argued that Jesus taught that a man should not have possessions, for, although he told one rich man to give away all that he had, to another, who said to him, "The half of my goods I give to the poor," he replied, "This day is salvation come to thy house."

CHAPTER V

THE PROTESTANTISM OF JESUS[1]

JESUS undoubtedly taught that men prone to sins of the lower nature, as violence and covetousness, were not so degraded or so hardened against his salvation as those — "perverse and stiff-necked" — who obstinately adhered to outworn religious beliefs. "Moses we know, but this man we do not know," expresses a sin of the spiritual nature that left those who entrenched themselves in it a prey to deadly spiritual forces from which Jesus could not save them. But let us first be clear as to what quality it is that Jesus describes as being perverse and deadly. It is not the humble caution which will beware of false teachers: to that he urges his servants, and he gives them a test. The test is the good life of the teacher and the good fruits of the doctrine; and this test must be somewhat rigorously applied, for caution is not to be put off its guard by the mere appearance of goodness in a would-be reformer. This caution and this test are, however, markedly different from

[1] Much of this chapter was embodied in an article in the *Monthly Review*, May, 1901.

the spirit which rejects the noblest life and the best ethical results of any body of teaching simply because that teaching does not tally with the authority of the past.

It is this spirit against which the wave of every successive reformation must break, and the fact that this deadly spiritual sin is a permanent element in the religious nature leads us to suppose that the protest against it involved in every reformation must be a permanent need in the Church. The attitude of mind engendered by it is the most unfavourable to any real revival or reformation of religion. How does any true reformation begin? At first like some half-guilty doubt, like a thief in the night, some clearer understanding of the Christ steals into one watchful, yielding heart after another, until the fleet light flashes over all. The recurring prophecy Jesus made of that coming of his which would discover his servants unprepared, unfit to receive him and inevitably degraded by that unfitness, probably refers to these hours of glorious opportunity. Such an opportunity was his earthly life, and it behoves us to learn from that what the protest of each successive reformation ought to be.

The argument of this chapter is that Jesus Christ expressed an ideal protestantism which must be essential to the perfection of the Church; that the nature of right protestantism, as distinguished from wrong, can be discovered only by an analysis of his attitude toward the sins and errors of the religious system of his place and time.

It is but necessary to consider the Mishna, or

any sketch of its contents, to see how soul-deadening was the legalism which at the Christian era entered into every detail of the action of the devout Jew of the Rabbinical school. The very fibre of his religious performance was of such stuff that a revived spiritual impulse could not long make his rule of life its expression. The observance of the Halakah, the traditional law, was the religion of all pious Jews. It has been a popular idea that a section only, and they false religionists, devoted themselves to legalism, while another section, the faithful who were waiting for the consolation of Israel, nourished their souls only upon psalm and prophecy; but this is not true. All religious Jews considered tithings and purifications and sabbatical exactions as the law of God. Deep down where the eye of God alone sees the inner man, there was, no doubt, a clear distinction then, as in the Church of all time, between what may be called "the faithful remnant" — the pure in heart, who always see God even through the utmost formalism — and those who may always be termed religious actors (ὑποκριταί), because they are absorbed in accomplishments. But as far as Judaism might be seen outwardly, it was technical and gross; and if some humble souls laid the greater stress upon the inspired utterances of their religious poets, the flower of the nation — its strength, its youth, its learning — sat in the higher Rabbinical schools, where the precepts of a literal law were painfully analysed and split into more and more shocking puerilities.

Perhaps the most accessible information concern-

ing this religion is in Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus*. In vol. i. chap. viii., we read: "The Halakah indicated, with the most minute and painful punctiliousness, every legal ordinance as to outward observances, and it explained every bearing of the law of Moses, but beyond this it left the inner man, the spring of actions, untouched. What he was to believe, and what to feel, was chiefly matter of the Haggadah." Edersheim explains that the Halakah was considered of supreme importance. Then he adds: "He (Jesus) left the Halakah untouched, putting it, as it were, on one side;" and again: "Except when forced to comment upon some outstanding detail, he left the traditional law untouched."

Let us be quite clear about this. Jesus protested against certain external actions of religious Jews. These were not enjoined by the tradition, and were condemned by the more thoughtful leaders of the legalising party themselves. The Pharisaic conscience was already vaguely feeling for definition of precisely those vices which he, graciously blowing upon its smoking flax, made vividly clear. They had already feebly protested against the taking of oaths; they had said something in favour of secret alms; they had spoken of those among them who made a public nuisance of their piety as the plague of their sect, and it goes without saying that both priests and Rabbis knew the illegality of the traffic in the temple from which the former reaped so rich an income. Now, as to the extremists, "the plague of their sect," it may be remarked that there are in every

section of the Church at all times men who, under the influence of the religious idea, perform deeds which to better-balanced minds, who hold the same doctrine, appear obviously wrong. Such men usually make stock-in-trade of some sort out of their sensationalism, and yet would shrink in penitence from their selfish motives if they were capable of self-analysis. In truest kindness to the fanatics themselves, Jesus held up such motives to the light; such actions in tenderness for their groping conscience he denounced. It is also very noteworthy that the most objectionable usages were condemned, not for what they were outwardly, nor for the doctrines they involved, but because of their motive. Thus the chief criticism which Jesus made of religious customs fell under the second division of Jewish doctrine; it was Haggadic; in which province even the most rigid sect of the Jews allowed large option of theory. This criticism is mingled with most earnest exhortations not to break with the existing law, but to add to it holiest motive, and with commands not to judge others, to beware whom we accept as religious reformers, making a good life the test, to be more careful to clear our own vision than that of our neighbour, to treat others as we would wish to be treated, and not to be blatant concerning our sacred things.

Thus this polemic of Jesus displays three characteristics. First, he upbraids only in harmony with the conscience of the party he criticises; secondly, his criticism refers to motive, so that it contradicts as little as may be the sacredness of

their code; and thirdly, he upholds the authority both of code and codifier, conserving for the moment the very law that he knows his teaching must eventually supplant. We shall see that these same features characterise his protestantism to the end.

Toward the end, knowing that his word cannot then save Judaism from dying in its sin, he again lifts up his voice against their customs. But again he gives the command to practise and lay to heart all that the existing authorities teach, and again shows that their teaching is not to be scorned but to be improved upon in motive and in heart-felt performance; and when he laments the woes that will certainly befall the devotees of a mistaken religious zeal, and points out the faults which will be the causes of these calamities, it is evident that the accusations brought against the leaders of the stricter party in the Jewish Church are such as would have tended, if heeded, to purify that party rather than to break it up. He again accuses them of being artificial; and to this is added the charge of spiritual pride and the zeal that springs from it, the exaltation of small distinctions and duties to the loss of the great principles of goodness, care for the external life where the springs of motives are false, and, last and worst, the devotion to dead teachers while those who are inspired with the living truth which makes for growth are stoned. These warnings can be launched effectively against many workers in any section of the Church; they are, in fact, taken severally and each set forth in its different

aspects, the burden of warning breathed by every faithful Christian shepherd to his flock. Jesus first grouped them all together with consummate skill, which displays what we call his religious genius; and the fact that he was manifested at the moment when the faults of the Church had donned their most concrete dress proves, if we believe in a divine plan for the religious development of the race, that it was of first importance that true religion should be exhibited as at enmity with the most natural faults of the religious. But it is impossible for any one conversant with the state of Jewish thought at the time to suppose that Jesus intended to dispute the general authority of the Judaic tradition for the Jews of that generation. Against the supposed righteousness of the Rabbinic Halakoth, which embodied a most degrading mistake as to what constituted obedience to the God of life and love — concerning that Jesus says very little. Edersheim says, "The worst blow he dealt it was that of neglect."

When all polemic was over, when Jesus admitted that his message to Judaism as a Church had been rejected, what did he do? Did he oppose himself openly to it, and in his last hours with his followers commission them to break with it? We have no indication of such a spirit on his part, and clear evidence to the contrary. There is no record that the infant Church, even when under the fullest inspiration of the descending Spirit, conceived of itself as standing upon the ruins of Judaism. In this vital period the

Church exemplifies much that we ought to repeat; but of iconoclasm, of the spirit that strikes at traditional authority, there is not the slightest trace. Even the leader of the apostles, the orator of Pentecost, had no conception that he was at liberty to neglect Judaic restrictions, or welcome to Christian fellowship those who remained in the environment of other customs. It needed vision and voice from heaven repeated three times to introduce these ideas; and when introduced, long and painful controversies only developed them slowly.

Such, then, was the character of the protestant teaching of Jesus; and this protest was the pushing of the large divine goodness against the narrowness of man's religion. The existing Church said, "Obey the letter." He replied, by precept and life, "The letter killeth;" and this phrase really sums up the whole of his opposition. The protestantism of Jesus was only a small, though essential, part of his message. The larger share of his time was given to preaching that "the Spirit giveth life," and the effect of his protestantism can only be fully understood when considered as a part of the total effect of his whole teaching, as in the case of any other reformer. Two things only as regards this completer view can here be noted — that the extreme temperance of his protestantism left the more room for his constructive work, and that the substance of that constructive work consisted in truths which, although they must eventually break up a dead letter, were on such a different level that they

did not obviously clash with it. He hid in the heart of Judaism a life principle which must ultimately break the shell not only of its formulae but of all successive formulae as they are outgrown.

The result of the temperate protestantism of Jesus as applied to the very unfavourable condition of the existing Church was that the schism, when it came, seems actually to have divided between the wheat and the chaff, the fruit-bearing and the dead trees, the sheep and the goats; this cannot be said of any reformation since. The Jewish Church, which persisted in antagonism to Christianity after the second century, exhibited no principle of self-development, which is the test of life.

The form of Christianity resembled the form of Judaism very closely at first, and changed from it very gradually. The new was added to the old — that was all, to begin with. The very apostle who was fighting to gain for the Gentiles the same freedom to exercise their Christian faith with as little change of external custom as might be, took upon himself a Pharisaic vow in the precincts of the daily sacrifice. Had the spirit of the Church remained true in all its progress to the example of the divine reformer, we believe that all such forms of Judaism and heathenism as were not desirable would have slowly and gently separated themselves and disappeared, as the sere blossom falls when the fruit is formed. Instead of this, how has the spirit of Judaism, as in this matter it contrasts with the spirit of Christianity, triumphed! The

persecution which Jesus foretold was perhaps as much the result of the evil principle within the Church as of the evil principle without her. It is of the very essence of Judaic law to believe that it is possible to translate God's truth so literally into human forms or formulae that the converse of those formulae must be false, and therefore that God is to be served by the sword of controversy.

Let us consider, by way of example and contrast, the Reformation of Luther. If he upon his awakening had said, "Calamity will certainly come upon you, ye saints of the Church, who sell for money the remission of sin's punishment," he would have carried with him the great body of the sober religious of that time. They did not, of course, approve of the brutal sale of indulgences any more than did Luther, and the closest analogy may be observed between them and the pious adherents of Judaism in the time of Christ. It was that which mediaeval saints did soberly believe concerning the rights vested in a visible authority which made Tetzel possible; and without their genuine goodness, their tears of true contrition, their true self-denials and holy motives, the abuses of such as Tetzel, and indeed every abuse that the great Church harboured, would have been harmless, for men are too literally made in the image of truth to lie long in the toils of an unmixed wrong. Had Luther gone on to take every abuse toward which the conscience of the saints of the Church was pointing, were it ever so feebly, and to charge it upon the whole Church with bitter cries of woe, his protest would gradually have carried all true

souls with him. They would have been the last to disclaim their responsibility. Rising in the might of true goodness that depends upon God, they would have responded to his call, and so he would have purged the temple. Internecine war there might probably have been; the chaff separated from the grain by the winnowing fan might have eddied and darkened the air; but our point is that the fan in that case would actually have divided between those who chose the grace of God and those who preferred the disgrace of the carnal mind. Anything that might have been left when a true reformation had been accomplished, would have been as dead spiritually as was Judaism when Christianity had finally emerged and separated from it — an ashen crust to show where fire had been, a shell from which wings had taken flight, a sloughed-off skin. The true Church would have gone on in its continuous life to fresh conquests of new truths. That victory, once won, would have been won for ever.

Is it not clear that Luther's attempt to define what he supposed to be the converse of the spiritual truth which God had given him, and his determination to impose this definition upon the Church, resulted in this, that when Christendom was split by the wedge against which he was heaving such heroic blows, the line of cleavage ran not between good and evil, saint and sinner, but divided the army of the saints pretty equally into two halves? And thus the truth, which is always first concrete, a life — a word only in so far as word can be lived — was divided also; and God could not be God

and give the moral victory to either party; the wound could not "heal with the first intention," nay, could be nothing but a running sore of battle.

Error! If it was an error to conceive of God's wrath as being appeased by money given to the Church, we can at least conceive such action as being an expression, if a mistaken one, of true contrition; whereas we should be indeed lost to Christian sentiment if we could find the expression of any God-given emotion in the rule for the highest degree of Pharisaic punctiliousness. Or again, what could be the error of calling the motherly element in the divine nature by the name of Mary as compared with the error of conceiving the Almighty as wholly material, as himself performing ablutions and wearing phylacteries, as causing the counsels of Heaven to wait on the decisions of an earthly Sanhedrim? If it was a crime of the Church to essay the persuasion of heretics by fire and sword, how much worse and more material was the — to us — fiendish desire of the pious Jew to sweep the nations before him from the face of earth and hope of heaven, and feast for ever in celebration of their doom! If monastic vows made division between nature and holiness, the ideal of life and worship which underlay them was at once more pure and charitable than any conception of holiness in the Jewish Halakah. Among fighting men there is perhaps none much greater than Luther, yet we cannot suppose that Jesus, who left the whole false fabric of Judaic thought and practice to perish by its own natural decay, would

under any provocation have struck, as at last did Luther, at the authority to which all Christendom then bowed, subjecting to a to-morrow of anarchy millions of sheep who could not as yet comprehend the call of a new shepherd. Jesus would surely have denounced, as did Luther, the corruptions of the Papal Court, which every honest Papist bitterly deplored; would have spoken out more strongly than did Luther or Erasmus, of enforced vows and the utter shame of selling, not only spiritual gifts, but mere legal justice, to the highest bidder; but he could not have been less tolerant of the ecclesiastical authority of that day than he was of that of the priests and teachers of his own time.

The positive illumination which Luther and his followers brought to the Church was very great. However mistaken they may have been in their negations and destructive policy, their word concerning God's immediate fatherhood for the individual soul, his personal inspiration in it, his fostering care of its truth, was a most true echo of our Lord's essential doctrine, an application of it so necessary to the spiritual growth of the race that, resounding through the history of that time, we hear the music of the promise, "Greater things than these shall ye do."

Let us mark again, for it cannot be said too often, that the attitude of the Church toward the reformation always pertaining to her true life ought to be that of an open mind, heedful only to reject the immoral or insincere in thought, and the works that tend to oppose the tender humanity of Jesus. Take the great reformation of God's

truth in physical science in the last century: if the Church, seeing the high endeavour of such inspired men as Darwin and Huxley, had held open her mind from the first to such truth as they had to impart, how great would have been her gain! and how great, too, would have been the gain to science if such men as these had not left the field of their own rich treasure to seek to destroy the hidden treasure in the field of the Church!

It is Jesus, not any other reformer, who is our ideal. The true heirs of his gospel are those who look to the future rather than to the past for the perfect understanding of him; who are able to work intensely, by prayer and by such form of expression as is given to them, to show forth the inexorable quality of the Christ-life. Such men are, indeed, the true successors of the Jewish prophets, of the apostles, of every true reformer within the Church of Rome, in the ranks of historic protestantism, or nominally outside any branch of the Church.

CHAPTER VI

THE POWER OF HIS DEATH

THE declaration of the gospel is this — that God, who is life as manifested in love and joy, gives himself to man here and now, in and by Jesus Christ, who ever receives, ever bestows, what he received, what he bestowed, in his brief visible ministry.

The initial difficulty of the human mind in accepting the religion of Jesus arises from the fact that it seems impossible to us to value what we would possess otherwise than by its cost to us. We think that the race has had to pay for all its gains. The dregs of the struggle of past evolution are in our thought, and, using cost as our measure — the very opposite of God's measure — we place a fictitious value on all things. God makes a free gift of the best, and sets a price only on the worst: sin he permits to us by measure, because its cost is so great. Our highest measure of that cost is the death of Jesus; and all pain and sorrow wrought by the Evil Will on men or by men, all premature death, is part of the cost — God himself suffering in all. Life and love and power God gives without measure; it is his great joy to lavish

them on all who hold out the hand of faith. Yet faith itself is his gift. We are set in an endless sequence; we receive because we believe, we believe because we have received. It would seem that part of our greatest mistake has been to set the simplest and lowest of God's gifts far off in a region of miracle and heavenly glory, regarding them as the results of the faith that enters the higher life, not as Jesus gave them — as the preparation for that faith. To receive those gifts which fulfil our earthly need would be to receive a better opportunity to believe that even the love of Jesus in its depth will animate us. Yet the gifts of God can only be received by a corporate faith. One man, be he ever so faithful, cannot rise above the faith of the race; he can only lift it higher. One corporation, be it ever so pure, cannot hear God's voice alone; it can only awaken the world and teach mankind to listen. The gifts of God are not to man, but to mankind. The Son of Man while on earth only received from God what he could give to men. The saint can only receive from God the gifts he can persuade his brothers to receive from him. According to the Johannine Gospel the moral necessity for the departure of Jesus — "It is needful for you that I go away" — was that men could then receive no more from him. The lesson of his love to men in forgiveness unto death was necessary before they could begin to assimilate all the earthly lesson of his life. Until mankind believed the earthly things he told them, how could they believe the heavenly things he should afterwards impart by his Spirit?

We see him on earth with the eyes of those who loved him best. His court is so royal that the kings of the world have ever craved its benefits in vain. He offers to all suitors, as the first and simplest rites of hospitality, the pleasures of health, the dignities of self-control. To those who enter his banqueting-house his presence causes the life that is past to seem poor and dishonourable — its best as well as its worst; but to the feast he spreads is added the appetite to enjoy; with the banquet is given the temperance that blesses its delight. He sets before men a standard of service, material and spiritual, more beautiful than any other; he points them to a spiritual goal farther than any man may see, and entrusts to them his great enterprise. He lifts them out of all cause of depression; forgives their sins freely; and offers to equip them with strength that will make their service jubilant. All his gifts are so bountiful that there is no limit to having except lack of desire. The only gifts he denies are those things whose value consists in their scarcity — those things of which, if one man has more another must have less, and of which if all had plenty none would want any. They are of so sorry a nature that they produce more pain than pleasure, the love of them being the source of all that divides men, causing them to enslave themselves and offend their brothers in the mean ambition to attain a trivial and transitory good.

Is there any spiritual joy so high as partnership with the Source of love, a share in God's high emprise? — something divine to do, that claims

every power of thought; physical nature unobserved to be rightly observed; a race beloved by God to be won from the enslaving world-soul whose breath is covetousness, whose gift is moral obliquity, whose reward is spiritual death?

Is there any moral pleasure like the sense of self at unity — a unity in harmony with all good? We only know ourselves in anarchy, and cry, "Happy are those who do not know — who yet live in the outward look, or govern themselves by the destruction of the highest part, or drift only suspecting the horror of the internal strife!" But to know one's self, and to know all one's powers in harmony, not through the destruction of any power but through the common guidance of all — that were a salvation indeed! There are hours in which we have partly attained to such self-control; it is only by the sum of such hours that we can conceive of the volitional salvation which Jesus offers.

Is there any material pleasure to compare with the pleasure of health? We have so far missed the mark that we hardly know; but there is an hour in the spring-time when we feel the health of the great earth-mother pulsing in us to the renewal of life; there are moments when every organ in the body is touched into harmony by joy; we look back to the relish of childhood for life, and by the sum of all these experiences we may try to grasp the bodily joy of the Christ's salvation.

Thus we see the Christ and his salvation — the gift of complete joy, of which our faith can yet only realise a small part. In the midst of this gospel

of joy is set the death of Jesus, no mere incident but the heart and crown of the message of life. How large a part of each evangelist's story is this death! How clear and minute is the description of the trial, the torture, the burial, and the resurrection! How calm and wide is the spirit of the narration, tender with love for Jesus, yet without invective, without resentment towards his tormentors, although these narrations were recited, collected, and perfected in the very midst of the fierce party conflict between Christians and Jews! It is, above all else, in his death that the power of Jesus to forgive is lifted up. As the supreme fact of his ministry is his death, so his death shows forth our supreme good — divine forgiveness. Here only God and man meet. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for there is excuse for them." We must say, "Father, forgive us as we forgive those who torture us." We do not now understand this atonement — even our faith grasps only a little part of it. Some of us grasp one part, some another; and the fragments do not join at their edges, nor even indicate how great and beautiful is the whole.

Yet let us rejoice in our gleanings! It is human death that has given us all the thoughts we have of an immortal good. If all men were yet alive, how indifferent must we be to any hope higher than that of earth! It is love and love's forgiveness that raise the standard of blessedness on earth and therefore raise the standard of the hope beyond earth. Misery makes heaven only a place of relief. The nobler, the healthier man's

life here, the nobler and healthier his hope of heaven. The work of joy for earth which Jesus wrought, seen close beside his death in the midst of his life — this sight gave a new reality, a glow, a warmth, to the world's hope of immortality. To share this hope there is no need first to define the divine nature. "We needs must love the highest when we see it." Having seen him whom we worship passing visibly beyond the grave, all highest hope and warmest love is henceforth centred there. To have seen the mind of Christ, the way in which he could forgive, the motive from which he served men, all the service he tried to render; to have felt ever so slightly his healing touch on the body; to have heard, even as in sleep, his word that frees the will; to have felt the comfort of his presence, is enough at least for this — that henceforth the death that passed on him is — can in the nature of things only be — transition; and that a state where he could more perfectly realise his will would have for us the beauty of home because our will would be realised there. This alone is no small thing. As the painter compels the gaze of those who look upon his picture to travel and focus where he will, so by the intensity and fulness of his life, by the swift pathos of his transient death, does Jesus compel the hearts of those who love him to hoard their greatest treasure beyond the gates of death.

The very pressing question rises, May we live where he is? There is, as far as we know or can reasonably believe, one law of life in the universe, — every living thing must be able to correspond

with its environment, otherwise life passes away. How, then, should we be able to survive in the spiritual environment of the fuller presence of Jesus?

How little we know concerning the next stage of existence from the teaching of Jesus may be vividly brought to mind by the reflection that he gives not the slightest indication whether man's spirit continues within the material universe for an age, or for ages upon ages, endued with some other kind of body, or whether its life is no longer subject to conditions of time and space. It is frequently assumed that none but a materially minded man can think of the next life under conditions of time and space: all that is true is that we are compelled by the constitution of our minds to believe that reality, the essential self, must transcend those conditions. There is, however, no reason to assume that the self can only exist either in the present material body or in a purely spiritual condition. There may be a thousand worlds, a thousand intervening stages.[1] Even if the universe of sense be but a dream, it may have many unfoldings. The belief that our spirits, after this life, pass immediately out of time and space is neither necessary to thought nor is it countenanced in the Gospels. If the visions of the resurrection life were objective the evidence is all the other way. The body of the resurrection was certainly as material as is light or sound.

[1] "The astronomer has set before us the infinite magnitude of space, and the practical eternity of the duration of the universe." Huxley's *Lay Sermons*, p. 19. See also Appendix, note D.

What, then, may we gather from the Gospels concerning that stage of existence in which Jesus has promised to meet his own, and where his kingdom, begun on earth, must be continued? In the life of Jesus we see that his strength of desire, his intensity of purpose, his eagerness of plan and intention, grew stronger as death approached; and we are permitted, according to the four records, to see that after having passed through death, there was, in this, no change. In the visions of himself which he vouchsafed to his friends he was still full of passionate desire to pursue those ends which he had sought while he lived among men, and it was only to those who had devoted their all to furthering his ends that he then gave his company. The great importance of the resurrection-visions for us is their proof that death brought no break or discontinuance in the character and purpose of Jesus. If it did not change him, we have no reason to suppose death will, in these respects, change any man. Taking up life after death with the same character we have here, should we survive in his company?

We turn to his words and ask, What does Jesus teach about this? The heaven, purgatory, and hell which our fathers built so grandly in the unseen, with splendid stones hewn from the literal interpretation of parable, have faded from our view as fade the glowing cloud-mountains of sunrise in the increasing light of day. To replace them with the imagery of "Paradise" and "Sheol" and "Gehenna," taken from the literature in circulation at the Christian era, would serve us

nothing. Jesus used these names to convey his most serious teaching; the names themselves had no one accepted definition; the literature of the time is proof of this. In truth the highest religious emotion is only awakened by terms which will be found to defy definition. Thus the term "glory," except when signifying human honour, has only rhetorical value, as it is probable that no two men have the same notion of transcendental glory. "The end of the world," "the creation of the world," "the higher life" are terms of the same sort. They can be used to convey the most valuable and important religious thought, while, at the same time, no intelligent man could cavil at the particular propositions in which they occurred on any ground of scientific inaccuracy. Words of such indeterminate connotation are useful in turning the attention to most vital ideas, which, while necessary to serious thought, mark the limit of human knowledge, and are the more useful because they mark that limit.

What, then, does Jesus teach? The belief that all men, in the process of natural evolution, will in some far-off end attain to divine bliss, may or may not be true; it is neither affirmed nor denied in the gospel. The belief that all who reject Christian rites and refuse to repeat creeds will fail to attain to the joy of Jesus, has still less foundation in his words and ministry. What Jesus does make very distinct, what he does promise very assuredly, is to lead his own for ever onward, to share with them all his joy. All that Jesus taught of the character of heaven was his own personal character. All that he vouched of God was that he had

the same character. All that he promised for the future was that his servants should dwell with him. When we have gazed our fill at all the rich imagery of the parables, and pondered all the poetry of his teaching, we know nothing more about the unseen than that the Father's house is vaster than we can conceive, and the Father's love greater than we can dream; but the great tenderness of Jesus, and the all-embracing love of the Father which he constantly recites, do not in his teaching justify an inference of universal salvation.

The death of Jesus, the manner of that death, gives to any doctrine of easy and universal bliss absolute denial. In the midst of all his teaching concerning the Father's love and readiness to do all physical and moral good to man that man could desire in response to the faith that is the condition requisite for his working — in the midst of this teaching, and after expressing his own most earnest prayer to escape premature death, we see him suffering an early death in its most terrible form. If God be the Father of whom Jesus spoke, he would, if he could, have saved this son who had served him pre-eminently. Whatever else this mean, it means at least this, that we are face to face with suffering which God's love and power cannot prevent. We reason very naturally when we say that God, being great and good, could not punish man severely, because none of us would carry our anger toward any one so much weaker than ourselves to such a length; but if suffering be not God's chastisement, it is real and terrible, else were such a martyrdom

as that of Jesus impossible.[1] In considering the ministry and death of Jesus we are forced to turn our attention to a destruction of life and beauty which is inconsistent with any inference we strive to make from the goodness of God to the nature of his dealing with man. To the materialist all that happened to Jesus is perfectly explained, and as historic fact it has adequate explanation for us all; but in the religious sphere man, regarding God as absolute power and perfect love, cannot find adequate explanation for it. The religious heart has always demanded an explanation. Every explanation that has been given may have shadowed forth some part of the truth, but the mystery still remains. No theory of vicarious suffering does more than place the mystery one step farther back, and that mystery teaches us this at least very clearly, that we cannot argue from God's goodness to any assurance of universal felicity.

One thing, at least, is surely made clear by a study of the gospel — the pains Jesus bore must have had a purpose quite other than that of satisfying God. It cannot have been physical pain or physical death that Jesus regarded as a means of lifting us to closer communion with God. Lest we should think that, we are told that they crucified with him two others, one on his right hand and one on his left. These suffered, and from the same cruel laws; their pain does not lift us nearer God. Every page of the world's history is stained with blood and vocal with the cries of the wretched, and the world is not helped thereby. That Jesus

[1] See Appendix, note D.

shared all this, and, while bearing it, could forgive those who inflicted it, is for us the help and lesson of his physical pain. What pain he bore and forgave as a man is to be the measure of our love to men; pain cannot be part of his service to God, or of ours. In emphasising God's desire for human pain the Christian Church was obeying a pre-Christian, ascetic impulse; it was not part of her Christian inspiration.

Jesus, who lived to show us an all-embracing salvation, certainly showed us in his death how terrible are the powers of cruelty which exist in this world and, for aught we know, in other worlds. In the death of Jesus the cause is clearly seen to be the cruel will of men — men who stood for religion and justice. They could have had no power at all to do what they did if they had not acquired it by virtue of religion and justice. Pilate in the name of justice, the leaders of the Jewish Church in the name of religion, did this thing. Nor were the systems of religion and justice represented fraudulent; they were great factors of good, and behind them both stood the goodness of God. Only a superficial sophistry can deny this, or deny that cruel and wicked deeds were the frequent result of both systems, and that men who lent their wills to do these deeds were acting in direct opposition to the goodness of God. There was nothing remarkable in the way the agents of these systems dealt with Jesus. Granted their beliefs and policy, they would and must have dealt in the same way with any other who came before them on such accusation and without making defence. The name of

God, the goodness of God, partly expressed in the systems which gave birth and character to the men who killed Jesus, lent them authority. More than that, the life of God created and sustained them. It was in God that they lived and moved and had their being while they did this dastardly thing. This is the Christian faith; that God the Father who forgives every returning sinner instantly, freely, the Father who can so work on the bodies of men that through their own faith the paralysed, the leprous, the possessed and the vicious, can at his word be made whole and free — this same Father, having given his creatures part of his own freedom, remains the passive upholder of that freedom in its cruelty, while it wreaks destruction on that which he loves most tenderly.

Standing before this awful fact, what reason have we to suppose that the moment our souls pass beyond this life they will, unless they have attained to the kingdom of Jesus, pass beyond the power of the cruel will of men? The men who caused the populace to howl and cry for the torture and death of Jesus died in their sins — purpose, character, beliefs unchanged. What reason have we to suppose that such men in the next stage of life are powerless to do evil, or are separated from all whom they would persecute? Further, we have no reason to believe that human cruelty is the only cruelty, or the most powerful. We have seen that the cruel will in man gives a presumption that there is a cruel will external to man. Human hope has often conceived of this Evil Will as chained in every state of being but this; but to this conceit

Jesus gave no authority. Lazarus was safe; but Dives, who seems to have been a fairly well-intentioned man with a care for his brothers, was tormented — by whom? and with what sort of torment? That flame is a figure, but even in present worldly competition its heat may be seen and felt.

> 'Tis the gradual furnace of the world,
> In whose hot air our spirits are upcurl'd
> Until they crumble, or else grow like steel —
> Which kills in us the bloom, the youth, the spring —
> Which leaves the fierce necessity to feel,
> But takes away the power — this can avail,
> By drying up our joy in everything,
> To make our former pleasures all seem stale.
> — M. ARNOLD, *Tristram and Iseult.*

Jesus teaches us the Father's love, and how much he suffers with the suffering of all his creatures, telling us that not a sparrow falls without God; this is said in full face of a great slaughter of sparrows for the market of Jerusalem! Consider the lilies, which God hath clothed better than Solomon in all his glory, and yet on the morrow they are to be cut down! "How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings," is one of his most exquisite expressions of his love to men; and its following word is, "Ye would not. Your house is left unto you desolate until ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." How many generations would fall at Jerusalem before that desolate city should arise and bless his name? Jesus distinctly states that he had good hope of

"saving" the sick, the poor, and the lost, but small hope of reaching the whole, the rich, and the righteous. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; but what about the ninety and nine over whom heaven has no special cause to rejoice — for we cannot conceive that God fails to rejoice over moral beauty wherever he sees it?

Who, then, are the whole, the rich, and the righteous whom Jesus did not hope to save? We meet in his ministry three types of men who would seem to be beyond his reach. First, there are those who have consistently done what they believed to be right, and are mildly desirous of conforming to a higher rule of life if they can find it. The young ruler, the scribe who asked which was the first commandment, probably Nicodemus, perhaps Simon to whom the parable of the two debtors was told, are examples of this class, and we know that a large number among the scribes and Pharisees practised a life consistent with their moral ideals. Secondly, there are those who, finding in themselves a lack of virtue, seek to supply the lack by teaching virtue to others. They strive to enter into life, but their strivings are not in harmony with what is best in their own hearts, still less with the higher life that God would base on these natural dispositions. Such are those who strain at gnats, who ask for a sign, who slay the prophets to do God service, who say, "I go, sir," and go not. Such in the concrete were those priests and lawyers who asked Jesus to reprove the hosannas of the multitude, who desired his disciples to fast and charged him

with the possession of a devil, who asked him by what authority he cleansed the temple, who compassed his death. Thirdly, there are those who break the laws of God and nature and will not seek God's grace — such as Judas and the impenitent thief. In these three classes, as seen in life around us, we find an aspect of God's providence, a psychological problem, that baffles our understanding. We meet with men and women of the first class who have rational and moral beauty as far above that of the average person as is the physical beauty of others. Yet in them this perfection is not combined with those passionate and insatiable desires which cannot find ultimate object except in God. They display a lack of warmth even in human relationships. This type of moral beauty is apt to content itself with niceties of morals, refinements of taste, or speculations about religion. Beginning on a very high level, such persons do not grow greater. The common sinner, if rising in the scale at all, makes great progress. Both nature and the gospel show us that God's love is not content with any stage of perfection, but delights only in the perfect rhythm of endless growth and regeneration which constitutes progress. God must love moral beauty — the heart of Jesus was drawn to those who had kept the commandments. A mother must rejoice in the beauty of her child — but if, as in some cases, an early perfection of symmetry means that her child must ever remain a dwarf, her rejoicing is changed to agony. It is in just such cases of apparent moral perfection that we realise that to

"need no repentance" is an actual human condition which makes the higher life impossible, except in the sense in which all things are ultimately possible with God. In the second class we see the fanatic, the bigot, the partisan. Domestic gloom, ecclesiastical strife, political rancour, are the marks of their presence, which spreads no compensating sweetness. They, too, are obeying their conscience, and we marvel at their obvious virtues while we suffer from their ill-doing. Thirdly, there are those whose egotism produces real moral obliquity on a grosser plane. Criminal psychology is proving that there are men who literally can "find no place for repentance," because they actually think conduct right in themselves which would be wrong in another. Such men are very often religious, and, as far as we can see, incapable of seeking reformation. Jesus always depicts the "unsaved" as self-righteous, and identifies repentance with faith. There is hope, from the teaching of Jesus, that beyond this world, in drear ages of unsafe and unhappy life, unrepentant men may yet discover their own need; Jesus always represents the regenerative activity of God as pouring itself into all creation except when shut out by the free will which refuses to acknowledge its own need. But in this life such people appear to us, as to Jesus, to be shut out from the higher life by a natural incapacity to see and desire it. We are apt to think that if we can say that they are not responsible it is equivalent to saying that no evil will befall them: not so did Jesus regard moral

obliquity; he said that because men could not hear and could not perceive they could not be saved from wrath to come.

If we believe in Jesus we believe that he can welcome his own after death to a condition of immediate safety, that among his own there are multitudes who do not expect his protection, that he will prepare a place where their will, like his, shall be accomplished by God; beyond that we know nothing. All those who do not attain to the heaven where God's will is perfectly done — and in the teaching of Jesus they are represented as at least as many as the saved — may remain, as on earth, exposed to destructive forces within and without themselves, for there is no ground in the Gospels for the supposition that God's will is perfectly done in "hell" any more than on earth.

What, then, are we forced to believe about "the righteous" and any others whom Jesus did not promise to save? Certainly this, that not one of them falls without the Father, that their failure and pain, as long as it exists, must be greater pain to him than to them, that he will be as kind to them as to those who are saved. Whatever sun may shine in the future stages of human life, the almighty Father, by the very necessity of his nature, must make it shine on the evil as well as on the good. Those who are without the salvation will remain for a time true to their own character. Some will be lost in their self-refinements and small attainments. Some will always be seeking to save themselves at the expense of any who may interfere with their rights or dispute their

religion or policy. Some will more and more be devoured by the flames of hatred and covetousness. Some will constantly wail to God to have mercy upon them, when all that they need is to be merciful to him by ceasing to put the life by which he upholds them to lower uses. Is it necessary that life should be put to its lowest use for the user to be "lost" in the sense in which Jesus used that word? Surely not. Outside of Jesus most men find their best strength by participation in fighting and gaingetting. They win much; they gain much; and there is a mixture of good and evil in it all. The good often preponderates; and all good, even the most trivial and transitory, is of God. For all we know, men who seek to live for themselves on earth may be taken after death to one and another region of the universe where there is work suited to their capacities and tastes; they may compete for ages upon ages with other living things, as the lower lives from which they sprang competed in the storm of earthly development. Some, by their very fitness for violence and sharp dealing, may survive whole myriads of their kind, and become — themselves slaves — monarchs of destructive forces. Such lives are led on earth: why not on vaster scale in other realms of soul or in the pathways of the stars?

There can be no doubt that the only salvation Jesus offers is the offer of himself, his own character, his own companionship, his own service of God, as the supreme and perfect good. To love men as he loved them, to serve them as he served them, to

suffer loss at their hands without impatience as he suffered, is the only test of his companionship and of God's service in the individual life; and his only plan for the ultimate salvation of the race upon earth was by the multiplication of such individuals, by the cumulative strength of their corporate life. Outside the kingdom of heaven it is not the man who most benefits the community in which he lives who, in the course of evolution, is necessarily fittest to survive, but he who can thrive best upon the community. It is not the nation that gives most richly to the world, but the nation that can, by strength and skill, take most toll of other nations, that becomes greatest and endures longest. It is not the religious system which leads the greatest number of men most quickly forward to nobler ends and higher uses whose kingdom in this world is most visible, but the system that can most effectively coerce the human conscience to enrich and to fight for its organisation. If the kingdom Jesus founded were under the same laws of development, in the same stage of evolution, as the kingdoms of the world, his servants, as he himself taught, would need to fight. But the kingdom he founded is subject to a higher law of development. It grows and spreads only by love and service; and when men would use the processes of fighting and getting on its behalf it fades and fails. In that way they may get much, they may win much; but the kingdom for which they thought to gain and to win is diminished, its invisible power is withdrawn, its strength is impaired, its victory retarded. What is effected by such

methods is only the organisation of some temporary army under a false Christ, the building of some transient temple in whose inner sanctuary the God of love is forgotten.

In his death Jesus teaches us first this earthly thing; when we have understood it we may be taught the heavenly meaning of that death. There can be no question that had Jesus chosen to invoke and play upon party spirit he had the ability to save himself. The insight that could give an unanswerable answer to every caviller, an adequate reply to every questioner, the eloquence which could draw the multitude, the indignation which could quell the violent and overawe the superstitious — these would have enabled him to form, of the noblest in the state, a powerful faction. [1] Which of us, leading a cause which he believed to be the cause of truth against falsehood, of the humble against the proud, of the poor against oppression — which of us, leading such a cause, and having it in his power to arouse a party in the state and arm it with the strength of an invincible enthusiasm, reinforcing it with the ever-triumphant hosts of God, would choose to suffer repulse, contumely, and the apparent extinction of the cause of which he was the champion, rather than break the law of love and offer battle to his brothers in thought or word or deed? This is the earthly side of the Atonement. It is only by such a conception of duty that man can be made at one with man. Most of us feel how

[1] This passage, and some others scattered throughout the book, were first written in letters to *The Spectator*.

powerless we are even to rise to such a conception of duty; and to those who have the greatness to perceive the strength and beauty of the law of love, how far is it possible to fulfil it?

Who, then, can be saved? Which of us belong to his kingdom, and live as he lived? Which of us in the historic Church of the past, which of us to-day, have, or in the near future will have, the fitness to survive in his presence? Does the death of Jesus in any way produce this fitness in us who have no fitness? Was his death necessary to make even the most contrite heart at one with God? What did he mean by "giving his soul a ransom for many," and shedding his blood "unto the remission of sins"?

We have seen that we do not know what God's justice is because we have never seen or conceived of any punishment of guilt which did not fall also on the innocent; we do not call the punishment of the innocent just; we are therefore forced to admit that the divine justice is yet far beyond our sight. If we do not know what God's justice is we cannot comprehend his forgiveness; yet for this we have a measure which, however inadequate, gives us a little knowledge — "as we forgive them that trespass against us." In the hour when we voluntarily suffer rather than tempt men to sin, when we do heartily forgive a great wrong which we might punish, we realise, although we cannot explain, some part of the forgiveness of God; we should have realised more had we obeyed this law in our corporate life, but we have not done so. If we cannot explain God's justice or forgiveness, how

can we understand God's conception of atonement for sin, or the philosophy of the way by which the sinner can come into communion with God?

Yet when the Christian believes that the Incarnation gives us a perfect earthly life, lived by the Christ on earth only in that strength which God will give to every man who looks to him with a like faith, then he realises most deeply that something external to his own endeavour must be done to unite him to God as Jesus was united to God. It is not prayers or tears or zeal or self-loathing or love of man or the vision of God in all things, that can do for him what he needs. He hungers and thirsts for more life. Faith — yes, faith, he knows — will bring this life; but his faith fails. He holds out empty hands to God and faints with intensity of desire. That which lifts him up and satisfies him is not the vision of the Christ in vigorous life here on earth, or in the resurrection, but the vision of the dying Christ, conquering even death with love.

We do not understand how this is, or why. All attempts to explain the Atonement may be conceived as attempts to answer the defiance, more or less conscious, which man's reason offers to God. The wrath of man and the meekness of God answer and re-answer one another in the darkness that shadows Calvary. We cannot yet hear clearly what God says; the Church tries to hear and to interpret, and through the ages we hear her in colloquy with Reason.

Reason cries, "If God were good he could not

look upon the sin and misery of man and live; his heart would break."

The Church points to the Crucifixion and says, "God's heart did break."

Reason cries, "Born and reared in sin and pain as we are, how can we keep from sin? It is the Creator who is responsible; it is God who deserves to be punished."

The Church kneels by the cross, and whispers, "God takes the responsibility and bears the punishment."

Reason cries, "Who is God? What is God? The name stands for the unknown. It is blasphemy to say we know him."

The Church kisses the feet of the dying Christ, and says, "We must worship the majesty we see."

In very truth this is almost all the Church, as a whole, has said; but within her there is a babel of tongues, and much more has been said and more feebly. Even what seems to be the essence of the Church's belief cannot satisfy the intellect if it be regarded as her whole, or her final, word.

In the belief and practice of the Christian Church we find modifications of all the religious efforts of which the most ancient history bears record. If in estimating the sources whence the Christian Church sprang we cannot afford to ignore any religious effort the world has known, much less can the Christian of to-day afford to ignore such inspiration as any period of the Christian Church manifests. The modern Christian who should think to serve God or man by doing so would be as mad as a statesman who should

propose to abolish existing laws and customs in order to invent new ones. All that we can be or do is the growth of the past. A flower, when it comes, is a new thing; but without a plant there could be no flower. This is true of each branch of human thought; it is also true of the sum of human ideas. If Christianity be true, the Christian Church must be the product of all thought. Its roots are in the furthest beginnings of the race; in the revelation of Jesus it came forth a tender plant; all the flower and fruit of the future depend upon the growth of the plant.

APPENDIX A[1]

No doubt the fact that we can conceive of, and Christianity reveals, a God who shares our suffering, though not our sin, has caused the Christian Church to picture God's attitude towards the one as differing entirely from his attitude towards the other. But that the divine nature can share with man the results of sin is no proof that those results are in harmony with the divine will, but rather the reverse; for in any personality of which we can conceive, what is in harmony with the will can hardly be called suffering — the pain, at least, must be greatly neutralised. We are forced, then, either to the belief that when God shares our suffering, that suffering at the same time in some way gives him the pleasure of harmony, or else that he does not will the pain which he is willing to share.

This argument in itself is not sufficient to prove that God does not will suffering, but it does refute the common idea that because Jesus suffered his suffering — and inferentially all suffering — must have been the will of God.

[1] See above, p. 109.

APPENDIX B[1]

THE great strength of Christian Science seems to be that it does not attribute suffering, any more than sin, to God's will, and has in this respect an estimate of the Father's character in harmony with that of Jesus. No one can deny that when St. Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," he said it of one who, by word and act, day by day, had clearly proclaimed that every bodily and mental disease was in opposition to the Father's will, and would vanish with the right exercise of human faith. It would seem that it was not the ability to reason correctly, but a child-like faith in the Father's tenderness and in his enmity to all ill, that Jesus regarded as the first qualification for his service, and this the Christian Scientist possesses. But the salvation at which Jesus aimed was certainly the salvation of all the powers of man, and the power of correct thinking must be included in that salvation.

From the *résumé* of Christian Science doctrine which may be obtained from its more intelligible writers, it would appear that they deny the reality of sin and pain in the same sense in which man in his metaphysical moments usually finds it necessary to deny reality to the sensible universe. Even if it is true that we are bound by the necessities of thought to conceive of reality as only that which is beyond any condition of time and space, this merely shows that the body and all its sensa-

[1] See above, p. 121.

tions, pleasant or painful, must, with the physical universe, be regarded as unreal. Christian Science seems to make a religious doctrine of half this assertion — viz., the assertion of the unreality of pain and sin. Christianity, taking account of the facts of the universe as we know them, accepts the faith that health is to be dominant and that every process of disease may and must be dominated; but this does not give any colour to the belief that in the degree in which the body is real, its diseases are not as real as its health, its vices as its temperance. The gospel of Jesus deals only with the spiritual in interaction with the physical here and in "the life of the ages," wherever and however "the life of the ages" may be spent, and gives no colour to the belief that here, or in any part of the soul's progression, sin and pain have not that degree of reality with which other phenomena are credited. What is clearly revealed in the gospel is that God, the creator and sustainer of all, has a never-changing will set against disease, infirmity, and sin, and will re-create man in health, strength, and virtue whenever the faithful recognition of this gives him entrance.

APPENDIX C[1]

A CONSIDERABLE weight of metaphysical authority tells us that in ultimate reality evil cannot exist; and this is taken by some modern theologians to indicate the absurdity of believing in any positive evil. The greater number of metaphysicians insist on the unity of the Absolute; and this is held by such modern theologians to prove the absurdity of belief in a personal devil. They fail to note that exactly in the sense in which the logical metaphysician holds evil to be unreal he holds good to be unreal — both are relative, both incidental, the one has no meaning without the other. Further, the argument which proves to him that the Absolute is one also removes human personality from the sphere of the Absolute. Such theology as that above referred to imitates Christian Science by helping itself to half the metaphysical conclusion — the unreality of evil, and ignoring the other half — the unreality of good. It goes further and accepts the metaphysical negation of the evil One while ignoring the metaphysical negation of the human Many. This is absurd.

At present the conclusions of metaphysic and religion do not seem to tally, and to some minds this is accounted for by assuming that their methods are different although their provinces are the same. This is a possible view, and it implies that if both metaphysic and religion are to be justified they must reach the same conclusions;

[1] See above, p. 168.

but that we are forced to regard man's acquisition of truth by each method as in process, because the development of mankind and of all that pertains to life appears to us to be in process. All that is required for sane thought is to recognise that each method of seeking truth, being necessary to man's life, must be healthy and legitimate, and that while we may therefore expect great gain from both, we cannot now know either in its perfect stage. At any given time their conclusions may be different.

On this view man, by the method of metaphysic, seeks truth by discarding all that can reasonably be doubted, and building upon what he cannot doubt only what can be proved according to the acknowledged laws of thought. As far as possible man addresses himself to this work using reason alone. Reason thus employed ever hears the voice of eternal truth bidding it —

> carve out
> Free space for every human doubt,

and to beware, above all things, of the assumptions of faith. The conclusions of metaphysic are only justified by the absence of any such assumption in the whole process, while in religion, on the other hand, man begins with the assumptions of faith. His first step here is experiment, the experiment of personal dealing with the object of his faith. In this experiment he uses his whole nature. He makes no progress but by persistent experiment. His conclusions are only justified or condemned by the results of his experiments. Advancing thus, he is lured on by the voice of eternal truth, crying —

> I need thy faith, my child,
> That I may draw thee from the seeming to the true,
> Long hast thou been beguiled.

In any case the religious man must look upon metaphysical methods of substantiating truths arrived at

by religion in another way, as a part of the religious life, just as any other aptitude or capacity of man must be included in the religious life, and just as, reciprocally, the experiences of the religious life must be accounted for in any satisfactory metaphysic. But he must be honest; he must not allow his religious assurance to make his metaphysic vague and illogical. As a matter of fact, there is no consensus of metaphysical conclusion which denies the underlying postulates of the Christian religion — that God is a person, and that good is supreme and must triumph — although it may be doubtful whether any important philosophy gives metaphysical basis for these postulates. Even to those metaphysicians who accept the conception of reality which extinguishes all that is phenomenal, that conception is not a resting-place. It is the City of Unrest, or literally, the City of Destruction, from which the pilgrim sets out to find anew the City of Reality. On the lips of such pilgrims the eternal question takes the form, May not personality within that city dwell, with all its vivid sense of time and change and pain and joy? In other words, we believe that if metaphysic is to be justified at all the physical universe is not outside its province; it must take into account the facts of personality, the love and hate which are the most vivid things we know; and appearance cannot be mere appearance. That which appears to be devilish must be related to reality, because that which appears to be godlike must be so related. They may not bear the same relation; but if one appearance has in any sense reality, all appearance must have some reality. It follows that evil is not to be described as the mere negation of good.

APPENDIX D[1]

THE popular belief that all men, or most men, after death enter upon a condition beyond the reach of sin and sorrow is probably a very great advance upon earlier doctrines, which attributed the cruelty of the Eastern despot, who figures so largely in Jesus' parables, to the heart of the Father. The popular idea appears to rest upon two arguments — the one, starting from the premiss that God is love, argues that he will not inflict prolonged suffering upon any of his creatures; and the other, starting from the premiss that there is in man something which asserts its entire independence of sense, argues gratuitously that death will release all men from that connection with the sensible which is now theirs, and further, that because sin and suffering are imperfections inherent in the present connection with sense, they are peculiar to that connection, and we must pass beyond them when we pass beyond sense.

As Christians we are bound to grant the premiss that God is love, and secondly the premiss that the inner nature of man asserts its independence of all but God, and compels the belief that God and man have as their essence that which transcends sense. A little serious thought will show that neither of these propositions justify the popular belief above referred to.

If suffering, here or hereafter, were inflicted by God, we should certainly have reason to argue from the teach-

[1] See above, pp. 355, 359.

ing of Jesus concerning the Father that he would not inflict prolonged suffering upon any of his creatures. But to hold Christianity in any sense we must believe that God permits, for some good end, sins that he does not will; and if we assume that suffering is opposed to his will as is sin, no argument from his kindness can prove that there must be some particular term to sin and suffering. Regarding suffering, like sin, as an incidental consequence of men's moral freedom, we must assume, if suffering is to end for all men at death, either that man then has his will by some miracle suddenly made perfectly consonant with God's will, or that he ceases to have freedom. The latter alternative involves the old belief in no further probation; the former has no support in the teaching of Jesus nor in the processes of nature.

The second proposition the Christian is bound to grant is that mind must transcend matter, and God and man must transcend the material creation. This does not give us any reason whatever to believe that the entanglement of spirit with matter, the unity and absolute interaction of mind and sense which is our only experience in this life, will for us cease with this life. Granting that a purely spiritual existence will ultimately be ours, have we, from any analogy of nature, or any inspiration of religious genius, or from what we call revelation, any ground for believing that the present is the only life in which we shall be an integral part of the physical universe?

The analogy from what we know of progression in nature is that whatever persists develops into something higher or degenerates. This may afford a presumption that man, having obviously risen from something we call lower, will, if he persists, continue to develop those powers — superior memory, reason, etc. — which differentiate him from the lower creation and unite him with that aspect of God which those powers represent, or that

by their atrophy he will degenerate, not into the primitive type from which he came, inanimate or animate, but into something with no power of further development.

The theory of many successive lives of the one personality, all equally unconscious of the others, all lived on this earth, belongs to an age of thought when the Now was as much the centre of time as the Here was the pivot of all space. This theory of recurring lives without connecting memory cannot prolong itself in generations imbued with the idea of the ascent of man. Nor can we suppose that man returns again and again to this little world, which we now know plays an infinitesimal and indifferent part in the vast ages of the suns. What truth underlies this idea needs restating to have validity, although as it stands it may by some occasional fashion be galvanised into transient activity, as in what calls itself "theosophy." While we have no reason to suppose that man may not lead many successive lives in the material universe our new sense of proportion forbids us to assume that, having played his part on this little stage, he must return to it. If we have made any progress in knowledge of the visible universe, such progress must be the best inspiration in any presumption concerning the invisible life, about which, let us repeat, we know nothing. By analogy from what we know of development, therefore, we may argue that man having acquired consciousness and memory, these powers must belong to the higher reality towards which he tends, and that in any normal future state he will increase rather than lose them. But this analogy leads us no farther.

The undoubted fact that when the change of death passes upon the body the life passes from it in a medium to us invisible, impalpable, and inaudible, is of course no evidence that the life is not endued with a material body.

The universe is full of matter and energy, of which we have no sensuous perception, the existence of which we only infer from certain results of which we only have knowledge from some incidental result. If we consider all the time-worn analogies of the resurrection-life we must perceive that the butterfly is as material as the worm, the dawn as physical as the night, the flowers of spring as gross as the black earth of winter. Tennyson's suggestion in "In Memoriam" of the immortal soul of his friend passing from star to star in the universe, finding congenial work in each, — "so many worlds, so much to do," — has quite as much justification as any other view we may take of our future life, of which we know nothing.

Man's inner mind, when contemplating reality, finds nothing more inexplicable or, in a way, absurd, than all the complex visible phenomena of his life on this earth; it is not in any way more inexplicable or more absurd that his spirit should go on leading a life as perfectly entangled with other physical phenomena, of which he has now no conception, in some other solar system, or should continue to lead successive lives of increasing or decreasing power, passing through every solar system in the universe.

To return to the second fallacious conclusion drawn from the premiss, that the reality in man must transcend sense, viz., that sin and suffering are peculiar to our present relation to sense, we must perceive that the fact that man will ultimately be perfect gives no hint as to how many stages of spiritual imperfection he may pass through on his way, even if as a separate entity he should persist to the end. By experience we learn that the higher the nature the more deadly its evil. There is no animal that can inflict so much injury upon its kind, or on the world, as man, and none that can suffer so much under injury. The more intelligent the

man, the more injury he can inflict and the more he suffers. Comparing Satan and Adam in Milton's epic, and Mephistopheles and Faust in Goethe's drama, we see that the poet's insight bears this out, while all theology declares that the pride which can uplift itself in stubborn inward defiance of the tender influences of God, is a more deadly and far-reaching evil than any sensuous vice. It is quite conceivable that moral evil in its worst degree may exist in a non-physical universe.

We must, then, admit that we have little ground for the assumption we have been considering as to the absence of sin and sorrow in a future state.

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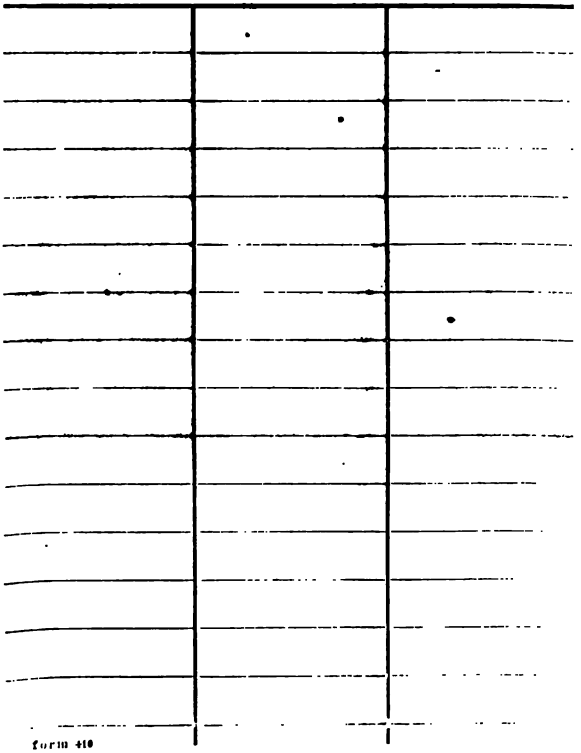
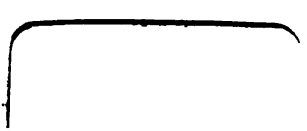
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